



**THE MUGHAL COURT'S PERCEPTION OF EUROPE:  
A STUDY OF ITS CULTURAL AND  
COMMERCIAL POLICY RESPONSES**

**THESIS**

SUBMITTED FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF

**Doctor of Philosophy**

IN

**HISTORY**

BY

**ADITI GOVIL**

Under the Supervision of

**DR. FARHAT HASAN**

CENTRE OF ADVANCED STUDY  
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY  
ALIGARH (INDIA)

**2008**

## ABSTRACT

Since the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, much work has been done on the European perception of the Asian World, on how the colonizers viewed the culture and society of the colonized, and how their perception carried connotations of power and control. Beyond generalized impressions however, very little has been written on how the Asians viewed the Europe and the Europeans and more importantly, how their perception of the European 'other' shaped the course of their interaction with the European merchants and traders before the intrusion of colonialism. The present study is concerned with exploring the relations between the European merchants and the Mughal court from the perspective of the Mughals.

One of the important problems that this work seeks to explain is the Mughal perception of the European, since they first came to India mainly as merchants and Company servants, and established their factories and settlements at different places in the Mughal domain. Following from this, we also explored the nature of Mughal response to European 'presence,' and seek to, unravel the connection between perceptions and policies, that is, the extent to which Mughal perception of Europeans shaped their commercial policy responses toward them. The expansion of European trade in India that ultimately led to India's subjugation by the English East India Company, was crucially facilitated by a concessional (practically 'Free Trade') policy of the Mughal rulers. We have sought to investigate as to why the Mughal rulers favoured the European merchants. The idea of a merchant body

working as a pressure group was not new to the Mughal ruling elite, but in the case of such European companies, the response was far from appropriate. The Mughal perception of the European merchants not only explains their largely favourable policy towards the European merchants and traders, but also provides important clues to the Mughal commercial policies towards them, as well.

The other problem that this study is concerned with is to understand the nature of Mughal reception to European science and technology. This is an important problem to explore because their reception of European scientific knowledge and technology crucially influenced technological development in India. Irfan Habib locates the reasons of the Mughal 'indifference' to European technology in the economic position of the Mughal nobility. He also explores the possibility that the fairly sizable amount of merchant capital which existed could have been a source for investing in new technology, and hence that, left to itself, Indian society capitalist development would have soon followed. If this did not happen, it was because, says Habib, "the agrarian exploitation pursued successfully by the Mughal Empire made its economy immune, by and large, to the temptations of imitating European technology until it was too late." A. J. Qaiser has however, enumerated several important sectors in which interaction with the Europeans crucially led to the development of technology in Mughal India such as artillery, ship-building, and in subsequent period, such as in glass technology, artillery, clock-making etc. It still remains an intriguing problem of Indian history as to why the Mughals showed an unusual lack of interest in European science and technology.

However, the Mughal attitude towards European science can not be branded as entirely indifferent, and hence it becomes necessary to examine the 'selective' process in their acceptance of European science. The Mughal India's lack of capacity to generate growth of science and absorb scientific ideas received from external sources has been dubbed as an 'ideological failure' by Irfan Habib and more generally as a 'cultural failure' by M. Athar Ali.

As is well known, by the seventeenth century European physicians and surgeons had made far-reaching developments in medical science. This was probably not lost to the Mughals as well, for European physicians were employed not only by the Mughal Emperors but also by the members of the nobility. The question that this provokes is one of discrimination in reception; the lack of reception of European science was not complete or total, and we need to see the basis on which aspects of western sciences were accepted, rejected or treated with gross indifference.

Another important aspect that this study has attempted to bring out is the cultural dimensions of the interactions between the Mughal court and the Europeans. This includes their perception of Christianity and the religious beliefs of the Europeans. Indeed, Mughal court created an atmosphere for a mutually enriching dialogue between Islam and Christianity over theological and metaphysical issues.

It is a curious problem that despite interaction with Jesuit Fathers and other European envoys about European geography, who also provided maps and Atlases, no effort was made by the Mughals to enhance their knowledge of the geography of Europe. It is one of our aims to investigate the nature of their perception of



European geography, and the reasons for their casual indifference for the continent.

When two civilizations interact, they create a dialogic process of immense potential. However, what one civilization can learn from the other depends on their mutual perceptions. Often unequal relations of power convert the dialogue into a monologue, thereby disrupting the creative potentialities that such an encounter provides. Equally importantly, appreciation of mutual differences can thwart the dialogic process, and cause to construct the 'other' in hostile and irreconcilable terms. Scholars have indeed studied the European encounter with the colonized world in several richly documented and theoretically enriching studies. However, these studies look at the encounter from the European perspective, often after the establishment of colonialism. My study, on the other hand, reverses the 'gaze,' as it were, and looks at how the Mughals perceived the Europeans before colonialism.

## **CENTRE OF ADVANCED STUDY**

**Farhat Hasan**  
*Reader*

**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**  
Aligarh Muslim University  
Aligarh- 202 002

### **CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the thesis <sup>The</sup> ~~‘~~ **Mughal Court's Perception of Europe: A Study of its Cultural and Commercial Policy Responses**’ by Aditi Govil is the original research work of the candidate, and is suitable for submission to the examiners and for the award of the Ph.D. Degree.

  
(Dr. Farhat Hasan)  
Supervisor

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## Acknowledgements

I acknowledge my deep gratitude to Dr. Farhat Hasan, my supervisor, for his constant guidance and support. He helped me throughout to overcome the difficulties I experienced during the course of study and always inspired me to work with dedication and in a disciplined manner.

I am highly obliged to Prof. Irfan Habib, for his valueable guidance and motivation. It is he who originally suggested me to work on the Mughal Court's perception of Europe. I also express my deep gratitude and sincere thanks to Prof. Shireen Moosvi for her unflinching support and affection.

Among my teachers in Aligarh, I am profoundly grateful to Prof. I.A. Khan, Dr. Ishrat Alam, Dr. S. Ali Nadeem Rezavi, Prof. S.P. Verma, as also to Faiz Habib for their scholarly assistance. My especial thanks are due to Dr. Gulfishan Khan for her encouragement and interest in my research work.

I am thankful to the staff of Research Library of the Centre of Advanced Study in History, Aligarh, especially Mr. Arshad Ali, Salman Ahmad, and Mazhar Husain. Moin Akhtar, Bansidhar Sharma, Arshad Chauhan, Nisar and Zubair were also very helpful. I am also thankful to the staff of Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh, Indian Council of Historical Research, and National Archives of India, Delhi.

I am indeed very grateful to my friends for their cooperation and emotional support throughout the period of research. Amongst them my thanks are due to Shweta Sharma, Anu Goel, Geetika Bajpai, Seema Raghav, Razia Khan, Sadia Shafqat, Shireen Naaz, Ashma, and most of all to Saleem Ahmad. I must also thank my

colleagues in Delhi University who extended every possible help to me, especially Kr. Sanjay Singh, Dr. Vedpal Rana, Manish Sharma, Ranjan and Anubhuti Maurya.

In the end I would also like to thank my family. My father and my husband, Vishal, were very supportive. I am beholden to my mother for the many ways in which she helped me, especially with my daughter, Aniesha and my niece Aparna. My thanks are also due to my brother Amal Govil and sister-in-law, Kavita Govil for their constant support and encouragement.

I must confess that all the errors and shortcomings that are there in the thesis are mine, for which I take full responsibility.

Aditi Govil

# INTRODUCTION

## Introduction

Since the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism*,<sup>1</sup> much work has been done on the European perception of the Asian World, on how the colonizers viewed the culture and society of the colonized, and how their perception carried connotations of power and control.<sup>2</sup> Beyond generalized impressions however, very little has been written on how the Asians viewed the Europe and the Europeans and more importantly, how their perception of the European 'other' shaped the course of their interaction with the European merchants and traders before the intrusion of colonialism. The present study is concerned with exploring the relations between the European merchants and the Mughal court from the perspective of the Mughals.

One of the important problems that this study investigates is how one of the biggest Asian empires i.e. the Mughals perceived European civilization before Europe came to dominate the global economy. Colonialism constructed its framework of knowledge and communication to create a hierarchical basis for the characterization of the Asian civilization. In the way the Europeans constructed the Asian 'other', they were influenced by the European Enlightenment thought based on positivist sciences

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<sup>1</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, New York, 1978

<sup>2</sup> Aijaz Ahmad interprets Said's orientalism as nothing beyond the familiar trope of a power which permeates everything and reproduces itself copiously in all the pores of society and textuality but has no origin, no object, even no agency; Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*, Delhi, 1994, p.185. Foucault's ideas about 'epistemes' and the close tie between power and knowledge reduce the role of the economic base and increase the role of social consensus-political power and knowledge in determining the historical configuration of societies.

and instrumental rationality. European orientalism manipulated its knowledge of Asian civilization in order to establish principles of domination and rules of governance.

One of the important problems that this work seeks to understand is the Mughal perception of the European trade, since they first came to India mainly as merchants and Company servants, and established their factories and settlements at different places in the Mughal domain. Following from this, we shall also be exploring the nature of Mughal response to European 'presence,' and seek to unravel the connection between perceptions and policies, that is, the extent to which Mughal perception of Europeans shaped their commercial policy responses toward them. The expansion of European trade in India that ultimately led to India's subjugation by the English East India Company, was crucially facilitated by a concessional (practically 'Free Trade') policy of the Mughal rulers. We have sought to investigate as to why the Mughal rulers favoured the European merchants. The idea of a merchant body working as a pressure group was not new to the Mughal ruling elite, but in the case of such European companies, the response was far from appropriate. The Mughal perception of the European merchants not only explains their largely favourable policy towards the European merchants and traders, but also provides important clues to the Mughal commercial policies towards them, as well.

The other problem that this study is concerned with is to understand the nature of Mughal reception to European science and technology. This is an important problem to explore because their reception of European scientific knowledge and technology crucially influenced technological development in India. Irfan Habib locates the reasons of the Mughal 'indifference' to



European technology in the economic position of the Mughal nobility. According to Habib, the Mughal ruling class was based on an internally stable system of extraction of agrarian surplus, its transfer to towns through sale of foodstuffs and raw materials, and the existence in the towns of a large urban population offering craft-goods and services of all kinds. So long as an internal agrarian crisis did not break out, the Mughal ruling class did not feel scarcity of resources and were unwilling to accept European technology. Only in war weaponry was this need felt; and this could be met by importing European guns as well as gunners. He also explores the possibility that the fairly sizable amount of merchant capital which existed could have been a source for investing in new technology, and hence that, left to itself, Indian society capitalist development would have soon followed. If this did not happen, it was because, says Habib, "the agrarian exploitation pursued successfully by the Mughal Empire made its economy immune, by and large, to the temptations of imitating European technology until it was too late." <sup>3</sup> A. J. Qaiser has however, enumerated several important sectors in which interaction with the Europeans crucially led to the development of technology in Mughal India such as artillery, ship-building, and in subsequent period, such as in glass technology, artillery, clock-making etc. <sup>4</sup> It still remains an intriguing problem of Indian History as to why the Mughals showed an unusual lack of interest in European science and technology. The accounts of the time are replete with references to the technological ingenuity of the

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<sup>3</sup> Irfan Habib, "Changes in Technology in Medieval India", paper presented at the Symposium on Technology and Society, Indian History Congress, 1979.

<sup>4</sup> A.J. Qaiser, *Indian Response to European Technology and Culture (1498-1707 A.D.)*, Delhi, 1982, p.35-77, 139.

*Firangis*, it being mentioned with pride if craftsmen at any place could manufacture articles that might compare with those of European manufacturers.<sup>5</sup>

Our study seeks to delineate the reasons for the failure of Mughal elites to develop adequate receptivity to European advances in science and technology, despite their obvious advantages. However, the Mughal attitude towards European science can not be branded as entirely indifferent, and hence it becomes necessary to examine the 'selective' process in their acceptance of European science. The Mughal India's lack of capacity to generate growth of science and absorb scientific ideas received from external sources has been dubbed as an 'ideological failure' by Irfan Habib<sup>6</sup> and more generally as a 'cultural failure' by M.Athar Ali.<sup>7</sup>

The Mughal aristocracy was unaware of the developments in Europe during the renaissance, and the developments in the field of science, specially biology, chemistry, medicine and astronomy, during the period. It was only around the second half of eighteenth century that they began to realize the importance of Western scientific ideas and inventions, and came to realize that Europe was far advanced in this field. In 1793, Abu Talib, before his visit to Europe appropriately notes in the synopsis of his projected scheme

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<sup>5</sup> Pyrard wrote, 'they do readily learn their manufactures and workmanship, being all very curious and desirous of learning.' Francois Pyrard De Laval, *The Voyages of Francois Pyrard De Laval*, tr. and ed. Gray, 2 vols. London, 1887-89, vol. ii, pt. i, p.249; Also see, *Early Travels in India, 1583-1619*, ed. W. Foster, Reprint, Delhi, 1968, p.16; *The Papers of Thomas Bowrey 1669-1713*, ed. R.C. Temple, London, 1927, p. 102; Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, ed. W. Foster, London, 1926, pp. 97, 118-19, 322.

<sup>6</sup> Irfan Habib, *Reason and Science in Medieval India*, Essays in Honour of Prof. R.S. Sharma, ed. D.N.Jha, N. Delhi, 1996.

<sup>7</sup> M. Athar Ali, *The Passing of the Empire*, Journal of Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland (JRAS), 1976.

of world history:

‘Europe was witnessing the birth of the great philosophers (*failasuf-i-azam*) to the degree that even a great number of common people (*‘awamm-al nass*) had developed a philosophical disposition. The Europeans were seeking to relate themselves with the Greek philosophers, as if the Greeks themselves had become part of Europe’s soil.’<sup>8</sup>

As is well known, by the seventeenth century European physicians and surgeons had made far-reaching developments in medical science. This was probably not lost to the Mughals as well, for European physicians were employed not only by the Mughal Emperors but also by the members of the nobility.<sup>9</sup> The question that this provokes is one of discrimination in reception; the lack of reception of European science was not complete or total, and we need to see the basis on which aspects of western sciences were accepted, rejected or treated with gross indifference.

We have also tried to delineate the principles on which the Mughal court and the social groups associated with the court, perceived the European beliefs, knowledge and cultural values. Along with it, I have studied the thought patterns and epistemological principles that informed their perception, with a view to unravel the process of the ‘othering’ of the European people. It is an important problem, scarcely studied, as to how the European ‘other’ came to be constituted and articulated in Mughal

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<sup>8</sup> Abu Talib ibn Muhammad Isfahani, *Lubb al-siyar u jahan numa*, Pers.MS. Elliott, 181, Bodlein Library, London, f.393a. cf. Gulfishan Khan, *Indian Muslim Perception of the West during the Eighteenth Century*, (Oxford, 1998), p.265.

<sup>9</sup> Hawkins, for example, treated Jahangir’s daughter. Jauhar Aftabchi, *Tazkira-ul-Waqiat*, tr. Charles Stewart, Calcutta, 1904, pp.168; Also see Niccolao Manucci, *Storia Do Mogor, 1656-1712*, translated with Introduction and Notes by William Irvine, 4 vols., Calcutta, 1966, vol. iii, Pt. iii, p. 214.

cultural and intellectual environment.

Another important aspect that this study has attempted to bring out is the cultural dimensions of the interactions between the Mughal court and the Europeans. This includes their perception of Christianity and the religious beliefs of the Europeans. Indeed, Mughal court created an atmosphere for a mutually enriching dialogue between Islam and Christianity over theological and metaphysical issues.<sup>10</sup>

A study of the cultural interaction between the Mughals and the Europeans also includes the study of the cultural significance of the exchange of gifts and presents between them. A transaction of gift is not only a material transaction but carries important social and cultural connotations, and the framework in which the people of two different cultures exchange gifts determines their mutual perception of each other.<sup>11</sup>

It is a curious problem that despite interaction with Jesuit Fathers and other European envoys about European geography, who also provided maps and Atlases,<sup>12</sup> no effort was made by the Mughals to enhance their knowledge of the geography of Europe. It is one of our aims to investigate the nature of their perception of European geography, and the reasons for their casual indifference for the continent.

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<sup>10</sup> Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, ed. Blochmann, Calcutta, 1872, vol.iii, p. 272; Fr. A. Monserrate, *Commentary on his Journey to the Court of Akbar*, tr. J.S. Hoyland, ed. S.N. Bannerjee, Cuttack, 1922, p.50.

<sup>11</sup> The exchange of gifts as a marker of social relations has been much studied in anthropology particularly in the writings of Marcell Mauss. Marcell Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, tr. W.D. Halls, foreword by Mary Douglas, London, 1990.

<sup>12</sup> Fr. A. Monserrate, *Commentary on his Journey to the Court of Akbar*, tr. J.S. Hoyland, ed. S.N. Bannerjee, p.28; Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, ed. W. Foster, p.381-2.

When two civilizations interact, they create a dialogic process of immense potential. However, what one civilization can learn from the other depends on their mutual perceptions. Often unequal relations of power convert the dialogue into a monologue, thereby disrupting the creative potentialities that such an encounter provides. Equally importantly, appreciation of mutual differences can thwart the dialogic process, and cause to construct the 'other' in hostile and irreconcilable terms. Scholars have indeed studied the European encounter with the colonized world in several richly documented and theoretically enriching studies. However, these studies look at the encounter from the European perspective, often after the establishment of colonialism. My study, on the other hand, reverses the 'gaze,' as it were, and looks at how the Mughals perceived the Europeans before colonialism.

**CHAPTER I:**  
**Mughal perception of European  
geography**

## Mughal Perception of European Geography

In the Islamic world, the knowledge of geography was at different level from that of the Europeans. In the education that was imparted to the elites in the Mughal period, geography was an important subject. Mughal notions of the physical world were influenced by the knowledge of geography in the Islamic world, based on Greek learning.

In the Middle Ages in Europe, the shape of the earth was known to be flat, whereas in the Islamic world it was accepted that the earth was spherical, turning on two poles (*falak muhit-ast bar vaygardan bar du qutb*), North Pole and the South Pole. The Earth was conceptually divided into four parts by two circles, of which the one is called Horizon (*da'irat al-afaq*) and the other Equator (*khaff al-istiwa*),<sup>1</sup> (Land masses were thought to occupy about one-quarter of its surface which was categorized as the inhabited world). Al-Biruni in 11<sup>th</sup> century wrote in Arabic a number of books on geographical and astronomical subjects. These writings included accurate determination of latitudes and longitudes, and geodetic measurements. In his Atlas, Al Beruni also portrayed the shape of the earth as round. It influenced the Mughals, as well, and in the paintings of the Mughal period, the world was depicted as a globe.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Hudud-al-Alam, the regions of the world: A Persian Geography*, 372 A.H. - 982 A.H., tr. V. Minorsky, ed. C.E. Bosworth, London, 1970, p.50.

<sup>2</sup> See for example, 'Album of Jahangir: The Emperor Jahangir Standing on a Globe,' in Thomas Arnold, *Indian Miniatures, The Library of A. Chester Beatty*, ed. J.V.S Wilkinson, Delhi, 1936.

Ptolemy's *Geographia* was the median text for the Euro-Islamic world until the 15<sup>th</sup> century when Europe rejected Ptolemy's earth-view once and for all. However, the Islamic geographical theories continued to imitate the ancient Greek works on Geography. Ptolemy's Geography was translated in Arabic in 9<sup>th</sup> century. Ptolemy's ideas were challenged by Al Beruni in 11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>3</sup> He also criticized those who 'only imitated him.'<sup>4</sup> Through contacts with merchants, he also collected some information on European countries. Concerning Eastern Europe, he consulted Bulgarian or Khwarazmian merchants. Al-Beruni is the first among Muslim geographers to mention the names of the river Angara and of the population of Baykal region in eastern Siberia, as also gives account of the Scandinavian Warangians, Northern Europe, and the Ice-Sea north-east of Europe. The influence of Al-Beruni on the intellectuals and the elites of the Mughal society is not clear, but during Akbar's reign, at least, his works were much read and valued. In any case, Al-Beruni does provide a lot of useful

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Also see '*Shahjahan Standing on a globe*,' dated 1629, signed by Hashim, a page from Kevorkian Album Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institute, Washington D.C., in Amina Okada, *Imperial Mughal Painters, Indian Miniatures from Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, tr. By Deke Dusinberre, Paris, 1992.

<sup>3</sup> He suggested that Ptolemy could have made factual errors concerning the longitude and latitude. He says 'now we find a crowd of places, which in the (Ptolemaic) 'Geography' are indicated as being to the east of other places, actually situated to the West of the others named, and vice versa. He takes into consideration the alterations caused by environmental changes while determining afresh the latitudes and longitudes and would not blame the ancient geographers for their errors; E.C. Sachau, *Al-Beruni's India*, Eng. tr., London, 1910, p. 161.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*



information on Europe that must have found its way to the Mughal scholars and ruling classes.

Early Arab geographers, particularly al-Batany and al-Khwarazmi wrote on the geography and culture of Africa, South-eastern Asia and northern Asia on the Greek models.<sup>5</sup> Abu Yusuf Yaqub al Kindi (d. A.D. 873-4) used translation of Ptolemy's work for his own geographical work 'Description of the Inhabited Part of the Earth' (*Rasm al-mamur min al-ard*) (mentioned by Masudi), and his pupil, Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn al 'Tayyib Sarakhsi's (d. A.D.899) geographical work titled "*Kitab al-Masalik wal Mamalik*" (Book of Routes and kingdoms) etc. was almost entirely based on Greek works on geography.<sup>6</sup>

*Hudud al 'Alam* (The regions of the world' is a Persian monograph, compiled 372 A.H. 982 A.D.) is an anonymous work perhaps written in Afghanistan. This manuscript was copied in 652/1258 by Abul-Mu'ayyad 'Abd al-Qayyum ibn al Husayn ibn 'Ali al Farisi.<sup>7</sup>

The text certainly forms a complete description of the world known to the Muslims of the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D. and again, is based on Ptolemaic geographical concepts. Although the author had read the works of several Arab geographers, the only authorities cited in the book are Aristotle and Ptolemy.<sup>8</sup> The author gives information about the islands in Western Ocean (and Canary islands) and on the

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<sup>5</sup> E. Honigsmann, *Die Siegen Khmata*, Heidelberg, 1927, pp. 112; cf. *Hudud-al-Alam, the regions of the world: A Persian Geography*, 372 A.H. - 982 A.H., tr. V. Minorsky, ed. C.E. Bosworth, p.3-4.

<sup>6</sup> *Hudud-al-Alam, the regions of the world: A Persian Geography*, 372 A.H. - 982 A.H., tr. V. Minorsky, ed. C.E. Bosworth, pp. 8,18.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, v.i., p.166.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, resp. fol. 2a ult., 4a 20 and 5a 9.

'isles of Brittania' based on Ptolemy's description, with some minor additional information. (Brittania is called<sup>9</sup> "the storehouse of goods from Byzantium (Rum) and Spain (Andalus)." Athens (*Athinas*) and Rome (*Rumiya*) are described as places (*nahiyat*) where all wise men and philosophers resided.<sup>10</sup>

The author of *Hudud al-Alam* divides the oceans of the world as divided into 'seven seas' (*khalij*). They are-1) Eastern Ocean (Green Sea was called Eastern Ocean by Greeks (*al bahr al muzlim*(sea of darkness) of khwarizmi)and *al bahr al-akhdar* of Ibn Rusta and Al Masudi, 2) Western Ocean (Atlantic ocean),<sup>11</sup> Indian Ocean, Mediterranean Sea, Caspian sea, (the Caspian Sea is called the "Sea of the Georgians' (*darya-i-Gurziyan*), a term which does not apparently occur anywhere else,<sup>12</sup> Black Sea (Azov sea for which various terms were used such as *darya-i-khazaran*,*darya-i-gurzgan/gurzyan*,*bahr-al Rusiya*,*nahr al rusiya etc.*) and Aral Sea.<sup>13</sup>

The rivers which have been mentioned in *Hudud al-Alam* are 1) Atil, 2) Artush (both of which sprang from Ural mountains),<sup>14</sup> 3) Rus river (was shown as having sprung from River Volga), 4) Don (was a branch of Volga), 5) Ruta (which was shown as being in south-west of River Volga is perhaps Danube),<sup>15</sup> 6) Kurr (was

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<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, f.37 b.

<sup>10</sup> Istakhri, p.43; cf. *Hudud-al-Alam, the regions of the world: A Persian Geography, 372 A.H. - 982 A.H.*, tr. V. Minorsky, ed. C.E. Bosworth, f.37b.

<sup>11</sup> *Hudud-al-Alam, the regions of the world: A Persian Geography, 372 A.H. - 982 A.H.*, tr. V. Minorsky, ed. C.E. Bosworth, p.179.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, p.32 (p.23 org.).

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, p.180, f.2b.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, p.215.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, p.437.

shown as having sprung from Caucasus range), *Nahr al karum*, (flowing from east of Ankara to the black sea). Tembris, Sangrias and Kama are other rivers which have been mentioned.

Like all other Arab Geographers (as also by the ancient Greek geographers), he accepts the division of the world into three parts- Asia (*Asiayat al-Kubia*), Europe(*Yurup*), Libya. Asia occupies two-third; Europe, one-quarter, Libya occupied one-twelfth of the inhabited world.<sup>16</sup> The inhabited world covered 1/9<sup>th</sup> in northern quarter, of which the western most town was termed *Sus al aqsa*, the uninhabited world covered the rest part.

The author divides the world into 51 countries (*nahiyat*), of which five were situated south of the equator, forty-five to the north of it and one (Sudan) on the line of the equator.<sup>17</sup> The belief that the area of Asia was twice as big as the other regions of the world put together, is shared by the author with other Arab authors also, such as al Beruni. Other geographers say that Europe was three times as large as Africa, but the division of the world into parts is borrowed from the Greeks.

Hudud al-Alam discusses the races living in Europe. It mentions *Majghari* (Magyars),<sup>18</sup> as living in a region to the east of which were mountains, to the south lived a Christian people called Vanandar. Croats lived next to Magyars. Other European races which were mentioned in the work were Spartans and Lacedaemonians, Danubian Bulghars (inner Bulghars), Bulghari are called Rumi because they were Christianized from Byzantium. Bakri called burjans and Normans 'magians.' Slavs (*Saqaliba*)

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<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, p.33, 82.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, p.33.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*

were described as Christians who lived around Rus River, and to the north of Spain. Inner Bulgars were those who lived to the east of Slavs. Next in numbers are *Jalaliqa* (Galicians). Then there were *baskunas* or Basques.<sup>19</sup> Some other races were Khazar, burta, Alans and bulghar etc. Christianised Slavs such as Macedonian Slavs were however, wrongly placed. *Bartania* (British?) and Gurz were described as living on small islands, whereas there seem to have been none. Races of *Rus* were described as Khazarian Pechenegs who lived between Urals and Volga.<sup>20</sup>

The European mountains which were described in *Hudud al-Alam* were Sinai and Syrian mountains, Armenian Taurus, (of lesser Caucasus), Eastern Caucasus, Carpathians in eastern Russia near Volga. Caucasus mountains were described as Georgian mountains.<sup>21</sup> Urals, Pontic Alps (another mountain-range in *Rum*) were situated near *Afrakhun*.<sup>22</sup> Selucia-Cicilian Taurus, Eastern watershed near Tagus river, (a hill-range north of river Tagus), hills near eastern shore of Caspian and *Jabal al Qamar* were also mentioned by Ptolemy.

The European islands mentioned in it were Britania (as having 12 islands in Western or Atlantic Ocean), TUWAS (or *Tus*) was situated north of the islands of Britaniya. *Ghadira* or Cadiz islands in Western ocean again. Islands of Mediterranean were named as *Jabal-al qilal*, till Calabria. Corsica was confused with Crete, Ibiza lay between Sicily and Crete, Sardinia was confused Sardinia with Sicily, Crete was confused with Cyprus. *Jazirat al*

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<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, p.424-5

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, p.42

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, p.204.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, p.68.

*bab* (Madder island), *Siyah kuh*, on north east coast of Caspian (now called Manghishlaq) and *Dihistanan Sur* were other islands that were mentioned.<sup>23</sup>

The knowledge of the European world found in such works as *Hudud al-Alam* crucially shaped Mughal perception of the geography of Europe. These works were accessible to the Mughal scholars and elites, and were even taught in the *madararas* and private education. The contacts with the European traders and Company servants must have modified many of their conceptions of Europe, but the broad framework that the Mughals received from the Islamic/Arab world crucially shaped their understanding of the geography of Europe. The Mughals concepts of geography were influenced by the Graeco-Arab works on Geography, for example, *Haft Iqlim* of Amin Ahmad Razi,<sup>24</sup> which was completed in 1593 A.D., and then *Haft Kishwar* which was based on *Haft Iqlim*.

Along with them, Greece and its philosophers found an equally eminent place, along with the ancient Indian philosophers and the learned men of Islam. In the Islamic geographical tradition the entire inhabited globe was seen as divided into seven climes, called *Haft-Iqlim*, largely based on the Aristotelian-Ptolemaic concepts. Mughal scholars continued to employ this system, with its celestial spheres and epicycles, sometimes using it in a variant form called *Haft Kishwar*. European countries were seen as located in the seventh clime, but except for Russia and occasionally Austria and Hungary, the names of the countries were not

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<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, p.54-60.

<sup>24</sup> A.A. Razi, *Haft Iqlim*, 3 vols., Tehran, n.d. (a copy of *Haft Iqlim* is also available in National Archives of India, Delhi).

mentioned.<sup>25</sup>

With respect to geography, Abul Fazl also made extensive references to Greek views and findings.<sup>26</sup> Shahjahan's first teacher, Mulla Qasim Beg Tabrezi, who was probably one of the translators of *Majmua'h-i-Buldan*, a stupendous work on geography, also followed Graeco-Arab concepts of geography. Jahangir displaying his faith in the Graeco-Arab geography, refers to four quarters of the world. He writes about Naqib Khan, one of his nobles, as an incomparable chronologist in the 'inhabited world.' From the beginning of the creation till the present time, he has by heart the tale of the *four quarters of the world* (emphasis added).<sup>27</sup> and so did Aurangzeb, when he wrote to Rana Raj Singh that 'regulations of my great ancestors, who are so much esteemed by the worshipful ones, will cast lustre on the *four-cornered inhabited world*. (emphasis added).<sup>28</sup>

In the works of Mughal elites, we find a similar faith in Graeco-Arab geography, coupled with lack of information about Europe. Sadiq, in his encyclopaedic account of the Ptolemaic geography, followed by a gazetteer, sensibly compiled list of coordinates and an astonishingly large atlas (33 sheets) of the Old World drawn on the plate carree projection<sup>29</sup> (but he did not give

<sup>25</sup> Murtaza Hussain Bilgrami, *Hadiqat al-aqalim*, lithographed edition by Nawal Kishore, Lucknow, 1879, pp. 493-500.

<sup>26</sup> Abul Fazl, *A'in-i Akbari*, Nawal Kishore, Lucknow, vol. iii, p. 177.

<sup>27</sup> Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, 2 vols., ed. Syud Ahmad, Aligarh, 1863-4, p.28.

<sup>28</sup> For the text of the *nishan*, see Kaviraj Shyamaldas, Udaipur, n.d; Mr. Vinod, ii, pp. 419-20 n. cf. M. Athar Ali, *Mughal India: Studies in Polity, Ideas, Society and Culture*, preface by Irfan Habib, (Delhi, 2006), p.64.

<sup>29</sup> The work is described by Irfan Habib in "Cartography in Mughal India", *Medieval India-A Miscellany*, vol. iv, 1977.

any contemporary information to fill the sheets for Europe; and not a very illuminating passage on *Yangi Duniya* (the Young World), found in one of the manuscripts of his work (in Bodleian Library, London) is probably a later interpolation.<sup>30</sup>

Fragmentary information on contemporary Europe was available to the Mughal elites through the missionaries and travellers as well as the European envoys who visited the Mughal court. There are instances in European accounts of their being inquired by the Mughal nobility and kings about their countries. The Mughals first came into contact with the Portuguese Jesuits, who came from Goa and with these Jesuit Fathers, with whom Akbar would sometimes discuss Europe. The Jesuits, whom Akbar had summoned at Fatehpur in 1579 A.D., presented to him an Atlas, which the archbishop of Goa had sent as a present. He was greatly pleased to see them.<sup>31</sup> Later, he ordered the Jesuit Fathers to bring him an Atlas, and on receiving it, he enquired from them the position of Portugal and his own empire on the map.<sup>32</sup> Monserrate is also reported to have satisfied Akbar's curiosity as to the distance between Portugal and India, with the help of an atlas.<sup>33</sup> During Jahangir's period, the Western European monarchs had started sending embassies to the Mughal court. By 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Mughal court had a fair idea of Europe and Europeans. Partly, their ideas had developed from their interactions with the English merchants visiting the Mughal court such as Thomas Kerridge and William Hawkins with whom Jahangir held frequent conversations

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<sup>30</sup> Irfan Habib, *Reason and Science in Medieval India*, p.170.

<sup>31</sup> Fr. A. Monserrate, *Commentary on his Journey to the Court of Akbar*, tr. J.S. Hoyland, ed. S.N. Bannerjee, p.28.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, p.126.

about the countries of the west, particularly England.<sup>34</sup> In 1617, Roe writes that 'I rode to court to visit the king, who questioned about the booke of maps.'<sup>35</sup> He further writes that 'the same month, he (Jahangir) sent for the map-booke, and no man could reade nor understand it; therefore, if I would I should have it againe. And so it was returned.'<sup>36</sup> Jahangir later even wished to see Roe's country.<sup>37</sup> Terry wrote that "The Mogol feeds and feasts himself with this conceit, that he is a conquerer of the world; and therefore I conceive that he was troubled upon a time, when my Lord Ambassador, having businesse with him and having at that time nothing left which he thought fit to give him, presented him with Mercators great book of Cosmography, telling the Mogol that that book described the four parts of the world, and all several countreys in them contained. The Mogol at the first seemed to be taken with it, desiring presently to see his own territories, which were immediately shewen unto him; he told Tartaria and Persia, as the names of the rest which confine with him; and the causing the book to be turned all over, and finding no more to fall to his share but what he first saw, and he calling himself the conquerer of the world and having no greater share in it, seemed to be a little troubled, yet civilly told the Ambassadour, that neither himself nor any of his people did understand the language in which that book

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<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> William Foster (ed.), *Early Travels in India (1583-1619)*, New Delhi, Reprint, 1985, p.64).

<sup>35</sup> Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, ed. W. Foster, p.381.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, p.382.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, p.212.



was written, and therefore he returned it.”<sup>38</sup> In 1717, Mr. J. Surman, an English ambassador (on behalf of the United East India Company) to the court of Emperor Farrukh-siyar, gave a map of the world to the latter, but nothing is known of his response to it.<sup>39</sup>

We find that Akbar ordered 'Abd al- Sattar to write about history of Rome (who in 1603 compiled the *Samarat al-falasifah*, with the help of a Portuguese Jesuit father Jerome Xavier, a work also known as *Ahwal-i Frangistan*.<sup>40</sup> This work was concerned with the history of the Roman Empire (*Salatin-i-Rum*), with special reference to its rulers and wisemen (i.e. the sayings of Greek and Roman philosophers), including the life of Christ,<sup>41</sup> no such effort was made to write about the geography of Europe.

Atlases, globes and maps of Europe were imported and gifted to the Mughal kings and nobility by the Europeans. In fact, globes formed an important item of import to India to meet the growing demand for this item among the Mughal nobility. The English factors sent globes as presents to the Mughal Emperors, princes and nobles.<sup>42</sup> A globe appears as a symbol in a painting during the reign of Jahangir, showing an outline map of some

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<sup>38</sup> Edward Terry, *A Voyage to East India, &c.*, 1616-19, London, 1777, p.367.

<sup>39</sup> C.R. Wilson, *The Early Annals of the English in Bengal: Being the Bengal Public Consultations for the First Half of the Eighteenth Century*, (Calcutta, 1911), vol. ii, part. 2, p.46-7.

<sup>40</sup> Murtaza Husain Bilgrami, *Hadiqat al Aqalim*, pp. 493-500.

<sup>41</sup> One of the manuscript copies of the *Samarat-i-Falasifah* is in the Bodleian Library, London, and one copy is available in Aligarh Collection: *Samarat-i-Falasifah*, Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh, University Collection, zamima 28, ff. 1-2.

<sup>42</sup> *The English Factories in India, 1618-21*, ed. W. Foster, Oxford, 1906-1927, p. 21; 1646-50, p.338.

Asian countries.<sup>43</sup> Raja Jai Singh Sawai (1699-1743) of Jaipur asked for maps, globes and books on astronomy from the Jesuits<sup>44</sup> when he built observatories in India. Nonetheless, the fact remains that no sustained attempts were made to bring European geographical notions and their new geographical discoveries into the existing framework of knowledge or even to indigenize the globes and maps.

The Mughal elite displayed surprising disinterest in European geography even during the seventeenth century. Danishmand Khan,<sup>45</sup> a Mughal bureaucrat employed by Shahjahan and later, Aurangzeb, learnt geography, among other things, from Francois Bernier, who was under his employment. However he never showed any interest in enquiring about the place he came from i.e. Europe. Even a noble of Aurangzeb, Muhammad Qubad Beg, *Diwan* in Deccan, who perhaps visited Europe (*Firangistan*) towards the end of the seventeenth century and spent sufficiently long period of time in Europe, mentions nothing about geography of Europe in his account of his visit to Europe. Nor does he make any reference to the European knowledge of geography.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> R. Ettinghausen, *Painting of Sultans and Emperors of India*, N. Delhi, 1961, Pl. 12: 'Jahangir's Dream of Shah 'Abbas's Visit'. Also see Silvia Crowe, Sheila Haywood, Susan Jellicoe and Gordon Patterson, *The Gardens of Mughal India*, Delhi, 1973, unnumbered plate facing p. 90.

<sup>44</sup> E. Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, London, 1932, pp. 133-4.

<sup>45</sup> Mulla Shafi Yazdi Danishmand Khan was an Irani noble under Aurangzeb. See M. Athar Ali, *The Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb*, Bombay, reprint, 1970, pp. 167, 179.

<sup>46</sup> *Khulasat ul Afkar*, f. 347a. Abu Talib provided this information as a part of the biography of a contemporary scholar-

Aurangzeb, by way of exception, did exhibit some interest in European geography. He rebuked his erstwhile teacher:

"What did you teach me? You told me that the whole of Franguistan (Europe) was no more than some inconsiderable island, of which the most powerful monarch was formerly the king of Portugal, then the king of Holland and afterwards the king of England. In regard to the other sovereigns of Franguistan,<sup>47</sup> such as the king of France and that of Andalusia, you told me that they resembled our petty Rajas, and the potentates of Hindoustan eclipsed the glory of all other kings; that they alone were Humayons, Ekbars, Jehan-Guyres, or Chah-Jehans; the Happy, the Great, the conquerors of the World, and the kings of the World; and that Persia, Usbec, Kachguer, Tartary, and Catay, (Cathay). Glory be to God! What knowledge of geography and history you displayed!"<sup>48</sup>

It was presumably through contact with Europeans that Abul Fazl came to know of the New World, and he devotes some space

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administration. cf. Gulfishan Khan, *Indian Muslim Perception of the West during the Eighteenth Century*, p.40,66n.

<sup>47</sup> *Firangistan* was a term used to describe Europe. Shafi, writing in eighteenth century, also used it to describe 'whole of Europe.' Muhammad Shafi Warid, '*Ajaib al Buldan*, Pers. Ms. Ousley 213 (Bodlien Library, (Oxford) London), ff. 22b-25b). It was also called '*Yuraf*' as used by Abd al-Latif. Abd al Latif Musawi Shustari, *Tuhfat al Alam*, Pers. MS. Elliott. 382. (MS. Sources, Bodlein Library, London), f.118a. cf. Gulfishan Khan, *Indian Muslim Perception of the West during the Eighteenth Century*, p.122.

<sup>48</sup> F. Bernier, *Travels in the Mughal Empire, 1656-68*, tr. A. Constable, 2nd ed. revised by V.A. Smith, London, 1916, pp. 155-56.

in his book on its discovery.<sup>49</sup> Abul Fazl was aware that the Europeans had discovered the Americas, which he called *Alam-i Nau*, the New World. But, apart from this rough idea, it was not recognized in Mughal knowledge system as the 'fourth' continent. They stuck to the idea of three continents till eighteenth century when more direct contact with Europe and Europeans evolved and more information was consequently acquired on world geography.<sup>50</sup> Murtaza Husain was specifically advised by Jonathan Scott to include an account of America in his *Hadiqat al-aqalim* as the first draft of the work was without any information concerning this continent.<sup>51</sup> 'Abd al-Latif explained that the philosophers and learned men of Europe had divided the universe into four divisions (*qismat*), namely Europe (*Yurup*), Asia (*Askya*), Africa (*Ifriqiya*) and America (*Amrika*). The latter being the newly discovered continent, while the other three consisted of the known parts of the inhabited globe, the *Haft Iqlim*.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, 3 vols., ed. H. Blochmann, Calcutta, 1872, tr. H.S. Jarret, Calcutta, 1891, vol.ii, p.26.

<sup>50</sup> Ahmad bin Muhammad Bihbahani, *Mirat al Ahwal-i-Jahan numa*, Maulana Azad Library, AMU, Aligarh, University Collection, No.182, ff. 124b-129a.

<sup>51</sup> (K.R. Kama Oriental Research Library (Bombay). Mir Muhammad Isfahani, *Risalah-i-Ahwal-i-Mulk-i-Firang-u Hindustan*, MS. No. R. IV-51. The Arabic version of *Risalah* is preserved in Maulana Azad Library, AMU, Aligarh, *Arabia Ulum*, No.33. Maulana Azad Library, AMU also contains Persian translation of the above. *Risalah hiat-i-jadid Angrezi*, University Collection, No.18/1, *Farsia Ulum*, no. 166, ff. 96b-108).

<sup>52</sup> Until the third quarter of the eighteenth century, Muhammad 'Ali, the author of *Burhan al-futuh*, could not write anything more than the basic fact that European named Columbus (*Qaulun-i firangi*) had discovered a New World (*Yengi dunya*) around the middle of the ninth century of the Islamic Era (equivalent to around the middle of the fifteenth century of the Christian Era) and classified

In the eighteenth century, Muhammad Husain seems to have been the first scholar trained in the Mughal tradition to have made an effort to delineate the place of Europe in the world.<sup>53</sup> Murtaza Husain provided similar information, which he took from a treatise by Jonathan Scott. This treatise described the geo-political configuration of all the four continents with exactitude. It dealt with the European countries, their circumference, territorial extent, capital cities etc. Abd al-Latif further endeavoured to delineate with exactitude the place of Europe in a geo-political configuration along with the other three continents. He wrote that Europe covered all countries of *farang* (*mamalik-i farang*), and a few cities of Turkey (Rum), such as Istanbul (*Istambul*).

It was in the eighteenth century that the Mughal scholars realized that the Ptolemaic concepts on geography had not only been challenged, but had also been successfully rejected in Europe. They were also now becoming aware of the contributions of Copernicus and Columbus. They were seen as outstanding scientists and philosophers of Europe in the Age of Discovery. Columbus was thought to be a sailor, geographer and explorer as well as a scientist who laid down rules of mathematics and geometry. By employing new methods of seamanship and technical

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it among one of the strange historical events. Abd al Latif Musawi Shustari, *Tuhfat al Alam*, Pers. MS. Elliott. 382. (MS. Sources, Bodleian Library, London f.177b. For a detailed account on it, see Gulfishan Khan, *Indian Muslim Perception of the West during the Eighteenth Century*, Oxford, 1998, pp.121-138.

<sup>53</sup> *Risalah*, ff. 1-7b. The Arabic version as well as its Persian translation contained a similar picture of Europe. Cf. *Risalah ahwal-i firang* (Arabic version), ff. 1-5a. and *Risalah hi'at-i Jatul Angrezi*, ff. 12a-14a. cf. Gulfishan Khan, *Indian Muslim Perception of the West during the Eighteenth Century*, p.123.

instruments like the compass, Columbus discovered the New World (*arz-i jadid*), hitherto unknown. Copernicus' findings in astronomy had changed the Ptolemaic world-view.<sup>54</sup> Copernicus and Columbus were followed by successive generations of scientists. 'Abd al-Latif sought to draw a logical sequence in the overall development of Europe. He wrote that from the sixteenth century onwards, Europe witnessed the emergence of philosophers (*hukama*) and scholars (*danishmandan*) who played a crucial role in the development of their countries. He realized that, with the expansion of man's geographical horizons, the classical Greek notions of the universe and ideas of cosmography had changed.<sup>55</sup> He specifically noted that the Europeans had measured the size of oceans, and according to their findings all oceans were one. Among all these oceans the Indian ocean was the largest of all, and it was the same ocean which flowed throughout the globe, acquiring a particular name according to the region it passed through, such as the Mediterranean (*bahr-i rum*) and the Pacific/Atlantic (*bahr-i muhit*) 'Abd al-Latif explained that Europeans had been able to reach all known parts of globe. They had determined the longitude and the latitude of the oceans with remarkable precision and accuracy.

While the writers in eighteenth century had started writing about European countries in more details than before, there was a visible shift in their attitude towards Europe which was visible in the stress that they now gave to the continent, often portraying it in positive colours. There was at the same time, a shift in emphasis

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<sup>54</sup> *Risalah hi'at-i Jadid Angrezi*, Maulana Azad Library, University Collection, No.18/1, *Farsia Ulum*, no. 166, ff. f. 12a.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*, f.117.

from Eastern to Western Europe.

Abu Talib<sup>56</sup> explained that northern Europe was surrounded by the Baltic sea (*bahr baltik*), encompassing four kingdoms (*saltanat*), namely, Russia, Prussia, *Danmark* (Denmark) was also mentioned by Abd-al Latif as small<sup>57</sup> and Sweden. These four were often united, and followed the Russian monarch. On the southern side, Europe was bounded by the Mediterranean Sea and this also encompassed four kingdoms: Spain, Portugal (Muhammad Husain and 'Abd al-Latif both mention that the kingdom of Portugal (*Purtgal*), whose capital was Lisbon, was a powerful state during earlier times<sup>58</sup>, Italy (*rum qadim*) and Switzerland. There, in the middle of the continent, lay the four other states: France, Germany, Poland and Holland. (Abd al-Latif mentioned that the kingdom of Holland (*Wahindis*) as the 'smallest of all in territorial terms.'<sup>59</sup> The islands of England and Ireland were situated on the western side of the continent. Apart from these, within the Holy Roman

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<sup>56</sup> Mirza Abu Talib was born at Lucknow, and was employed in posts of high emolument under Nawab Shuja ud Daula and Nawab Asaf ud Daula. In the time of the latter, he lost his office, and came to seek subsistence from the English. He was ordered to visit Europe by them in 1799, where after he wrote an account of Europe and America. *Travels of Mirza Abu Talib Khan (Asia, Africa and Europe, During the Years 1799 to 1803)*, tr. Charles Stewart, N. Delhi, 1972.

<sup>57</sup> Abd al Latif Musawi Shustari, *Tuhfat al-'Alam*, ff.182-185a, *Risalah*, f. 4a. cf. Gulfishan Khan, *Indian Muslim Perception of the West during the Eighteenth Century*, p.126.

<sup>58</sup> *Risalah hi'at-i Jadid Angrezi*, Maulana Azad Library, University Collection, No.18/1, *Farsia Ulum*, no. 166, f. 7; also f. 12a.

<sup>59</sup> Abd al Latif Musawi Shustari, *Tuhfat al-'Alam*, ff.182-185a, *Risalah*, f. 4a. cf. Gulfishan Khan, *Indian Muslim Perception of the West during the Eighteenth Century*, p.126.

Empire (*rum qadim*) and Germany, there were ten or-twelve smaller and weaker states.<sup>60</sup>

'Abd al-Latif wrote that the entire state of Germany comprised three hundred *kuroh* (six hundred miles) in longitude and its latitude was two hundred *kuroh* (four hundred miles). Its capital was known as Vienna.<sup>61</sup> 'Abd al-Latif further wrote about Hungary (Angari) as another state of Europe, covering a longitude of-five hundred and fifty *kuroh*, and a latitude of seventy *kuroh* also.<sup>62</sup> He mentioned that Spain was one of the most extensive empires. Its sovereign was more powerful than the other kings of Europe and it had traditionally been called Ispaniyol. France was a country, wrote 'Abd al-Latif, which covered a territory of hundred *kuroh* in longitude and two hundred and fifty *kuroh* in latitude. It also occupied land of similar size in America.<sup>63</sup>

Abu Talib explained with geographical clarity that the kingdom of England (*Inglistan*) comprised England, Scotland and Wales, the royal heir-apparent having the tide of Prince of Wales. All the three together constituted Great Britain (*Bartaniya' Buzurg*).<sup>64</sup> Muhammad Husain noted that England (*Inglistan*) was called Inglisiya by Arabic speaking people, but it was known as

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<sup>60</sup> *Risalah*, f. 7. cf. Gulfishan Khan, *Indian Muslim Perception of the West during the Eighteenth Century*, p.126.

<sup>61</sup> Abu Talib ibn Muhammad Isfahani, *Masir-i Talibi*, Lucknow, 1782, f.161.

<sup>62</sup> Abd al Latif Musawi Shustari, *Tuhfat al-'Alam*, ff. 179b-180a. cf. Gulfishan Khan, *Indian Muslim Perception of the West during the Eighteenth Century*, p.126.

<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*, ff. 129-306.

<sup>64</sup> *Risalah*, f. 4. cf. Gulfishan Khan, *Indian Muslim Perception of the West during the Eighteenth Century*, p.126.



Great Britain (*Grate Britan*) by the Europeans themselves.<sup>65</sup> Abd al-Latif wrote that England (*Inglistan*) comprised- two islands (*jazira*), England (*Ingiland*) and Ireland (*Ayarland*), called by the Muslims 'large Britain' (*Bartaniya' akbar*) and 'small Britain' (*Bartaniya' asghar*) respectively.<sup>66</sup>

Due to the geographical discoveries in the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Europeans developed an expanding notion of space, and could see, at least before the advent colonialism, that Europe was not the centre of the universe. Such an expansive notion of space is generally absent in Mughal India. For most Mughal scholars and elites, the Mughal Empire was the centre of the cosmos. They knew of the existence of the other worlds, as well, but assigned to their empire a place of pre-eminence. The other Asian empires-the Safavids, the Uzbeks, the Ottomans-could claim a secondary position, but Europe was, in their knowledge of the geography of the world, a marginal and an insignificant place, unworthy of scholarly interest.

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<sup>65</sup> *Hadiqat ul aqalim*, pp. 515-23.

<sup>66</sup> England had been mentioned as a small island in *Hudud al Alam*. And later in a map prepared by al-Idrisi, four islands were drawn in a map as adjacent to each other in Western Europe, beginning with *Djazira Irlanda* (Ireland), *Djazira Rasianda* (Scotland?), *Djazira Anklitara* (England (?)) and *Djazira Dans* (?). cf. *The World According to Idrisi*, A.D.1154) in "A Historical Atlas of Islam," ed. William C. Brice, Leiden, 1981, p.1.

**CHAPTER II:**  
**Mughal perception of European  
political system**

### **Mughal Perception of European Political System**

Prior to the reign of Akbar, the only European nation with which the Mughals established political contacts was Turkey under the Ottomans. The year 1556 marked the beginning of diplomatic relations between the Mughals and the Ottoman Turks when Emperor Humayun (1530-1556) sent a letter to Ottoman Sultan Suleiman II 'the Magnificent' (1520-66).<sup>1</sup> During Akbar's reign, little effort was made to improve diplomatic relations with the Turks.<sup>2</sup> However, in 1570s, Portuguese started coming to Akbar's court and were given warm reception. In spite of occasional hostilities and frictions, the Portuguese developed regular political relations at the Mughal court. Perhaps the Jesuit priest, Father Julian Pereira, introduced through Pedro Tavares, was the first to come to his court in March, 1578.<sup>3</sup>

Since the first decade of 17<sup>th</sup> century, Jahangir developed contacts with another West European nation- the English (*Frangiyan-i Inglusi*) who had started to visit his court. He occasionally enquired the Jesuits about the English. Thomas Roe, e.g., wrote in a letter to the East India Company that, 'he (Jahangir) accepted your presents well; but after the English were come away he asked the Jesuyte (Francis Corsi) whether the king of England were a great kyng, that sent presents of so small valewe, and that

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<sup>1</sup> Naimur Rahman Farooqui, *Mughal-Ottoman Relations*, Delhi, 1989, p.4. See also Jauhar Aftabchi, *Tazkira-ul-Waqiat*, tr. Charles Stewart, p.75.

<sup>2</sup> Naimur Rahman Farooqui, *Mughal-Ottoman Relations*, pp. 17,22.

<sup>3</sup> Monserrate, *Relecam*, JASB, VIII, 1912, (Hosten), p.218. cf. E. Maclagan, p.23.

he looked for some jewells.’<sup>4</sup> By the time of arrival of Sir Thomas Roe’s embassy in 1615 from England, the Mughal court had a fair idea of Europe and the Europeans. During the third mission to Akbar’s court, (1594), the prince Murad, (Akbar’s second son) summoned the Jesuit Fathers on the New year day and enquired from them about the customs of Portugal, the occupations of royalty in Europe etc.<sup>5</sup> Partly their ideas about the Europeans had developed from their interactions with the earlier English merchants visiting the Mughal Court such as Thomas Kerridge and William Hawkins with whom Jahangir held conversations about the countries of the West, particularly England,<sup>6</sup> as well as with other English merchants such as Captain Thomas Best, Edwards etc. In a letter dated 7th September, 1613 to Thomas Aldworth and Council at Surat, Thomas Kerridge wrote that the Jesuits tell the king that we are a people rebelled subjects to their king, and make us and the Hollanders as one, they allege further our country and prince of no respect nor force, having only one city, wherein a few merchants, and that our king hath no hand in this business.’<sup>7</sup> In October 1613, in a letter to Thomas Smith and other merchants, William Biddulph wrote that ‘Jesuits, who ‘prevail much with him, tell him that we are a base people and dwell in a little island, and of

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<sup>4</sup> Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, ed. W. Foster, p.99.

<sup>5</sup> E. Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, p.52.

<sup>6</sup> W. Foster, *Early Travels in India (1583-1619)*, pp.64,82.

<sup>7</sup> *Letter Received by the East India Company from its Servants in the East*, 6 vols., 1602-1617, ed. F.C. Danvers and W. Foster, London, 1896-1902, vol.i, p.282.

no force.’<sup>8</sup> However, Jahangir knew that the English had their own king, they were not subservient to the Portuguese monarch.<sup>9</sup>

In 1614, Edwards (who posed as English ambassador in Mughal Court in 1614),<sup>10</sup> brought the pictures of king and Queen of England as a present for the king.<sup>11</sup> Roe also observed that, “at the upper end (of the throne of Jahangir) was set the King, my sovereigns picture, the Queenes, my lady Elizabeth, Sir Thomas Smiths and some others.”<sup>12</sup> Jamal ud Din Hussain, a noble, took Roe ‘to a house of Jahangir, and a garden of pleasure, Havaz Gemall, a mile out of towne, to feaste mee in, and showed the king’s closets and retyring roomes, and in some panes (i.e. panels) cotypes of the French kings and other Christian Princes.’<sup>13</sup> He later even expressed a wish to see Roe’s country.<sup>14</sup> At their farewell audience, they (Jourdain and three others) presented Jahangir with a ‘peece of gould of our kings quonye, which he looked earnestlie upon and putt itt in his pocket.’<sup>15</sup>

Thomas Roe had come to India in 1615 as an ambassador of Great Britain, with the intention of securing trading privileges for the English Company in Mughal India. Prior to Roe, a negative

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<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, vol.i, p.300.

<sup>9</sup> Muhammad Hindushah Astarbadi Ferishta, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, 2 vols. (Lucknow, 1865), pp. 368-73. (Ferishta’s account was written in 1606-10).

<sup>10</sup> W. Foster (ed.), *Early Travels in India (1583-1619)*, pp.229-30.

<sup>11</sup> *Letter Received by the East India Company from its Servants in the East*, vol.ii, p.138.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, ed. W. Foster, p. 357.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, p.211.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, p.212.

<sup>15</sup> W. Foster (ed.), *Early Travels in India (1583-1619)*, p.67n.

image had been formed of the English in the Mughal court as William Edwards 'tooke the title and state of an ambassador upon him; behavinge himselfe not as beseeminge an ambassadour, was kicked and spurned by the King's porters out of the courte-gates, to the unrecoverable disgrace of our kinge for redresse, making himselfe and his nation a laughing stock to all people in general.'<sup>16</sup>

The English probably hoped that by elevating the status of Roe to that of an ambassador, they would be able to pressure and persuade the Mughal court to into providing a privileged and dignified treatment to him and to the English trading activities in India.<sup>17</sup>

Roe was sent with a purpose to 'procure and confirme such articles and privileges as may bee most beneficiall.'<sup>18</sup> However the embassy failed.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, as an ambassador, Roe had expected a respectful treatment from the Mughals. Initially, Roe had reasons to believe that his status as an ambassador was duly acknowledged by Jahangir.<sup>20</sup> He notes that he was 'treated with more favour and outward grace, then was showed to any ambassador, eyther of the Turke or Persian, or other whatsoever.'<sup>21</sup>

However soon the hopes of the English were belied<sup>22</sup> and other English merchants accompanying him came round to the

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<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, p.229-30.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, ed. W. Foster, p. p.xvii,xix.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, pxvii.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*,p.xiv-xv.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*,p.94,212,356-7.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, p.xxxii.

<sup>22</sup> *Letter Received by the East India Company from its Servants in the East*, ed. W. Foster, London, 1896,vol.i, p.100; vol.v, p.xxiii; Also see Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, ed. W. Foster, pp.212,466.

view that the concept of an 'ambassador' was alien to Mughal sovereignty.<sup>23</sup> Kerridge, for example, said that the 'customs of these princes is not to receive ambassador(s) with such dewe 'observation and honourable respect as is accustomed in Christendom, For if the King of Persia, who is the mightiest neighbour to this country, sent a prince of his blood in embassy heather, he should allwayes stand and attend in presence of the King, as if he were a servant.'<sup>24</sup> Another debacle took place when 'the new pretended Spanish ambassador was refused audience, the king having said that 'he was no right ambassador.' The king demanded of the Jesuits if he had any letters, who told him that there was 'none from Spayne, and professed also that he came from Damon, a city of Portugalls.'<sup>25</sup>

The exchange of ambassadors was a regular aspect of Mughal sovereignty. The Mughal court received and dispatched ambassadors regularly to the Courts of Safavids and Uzbeks, occasionally from Ottomans (Humayun in his memoirs noted that of the most potent sovereigns who sent embassies was king of dynasty of Othman,<sup>26</sup> and even from 'Cherif (sharif) at Mecca, king of Hyeman, prince of Basra,<sup>27</sup> Ethopia in Africa<sup>28</sup> and Turan (there

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<sup>23</sup> Roe wrote to the company that, 'an ambassador lies not in fitt honor. I could sooner die then be subject to the slaverye the Persian is content with.' Cf. Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, ed. W. Foster, p.310.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, p.258.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, p. p.454.

<sup>26</sup> No embassy was received from Ottomans during his period. Jauhar Aftabchi, *Tazkira-ul-Waqiat*, tr. Charles Stewart, Delhi, 1972, p.123.

<sup>27</sup> F. Bernier, *Travels in the Mughal Empire, 1656-68*, tr. A. Constable, p.133.

were no less than four embassies from Abdullah Khan, king of Turan in 1572, 1577, 1586, 1596, and also from his son, Abdul Mumin),<sup>29</sup> although unlike in Europe there were no permanent representations of one sovereign at the seat of another in the form of embassies or consulates; embassies here were in the nature of a temporary mission, often with specific purposes.<sup>30</sup> Monserrate observed that, "Zelaldinus behaves with marked courtesy and kindness to foreigners, especially to the ambassadors of foreign kings."<sup>31</sup> Besides, the reception that was accorded to the ambassador signified the level of political relations with that country.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*, p.135,139.

<sup>29</sup> Fr. A. Monserrate, *Commentary on his Journey to the Court of Akbar*, tr. J.S. Hoyland, ed. S.N. Bannerjee, p.204.

<sup>30</sup> M. Athar Ali, 'International Law' or Conventions Governing Conduct of Relations between Asian States, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, in "Towards an Interpretation of the Mughal Empire," in *Mughal India: Studies in Polity, Ideas, Society and Culture*, Preface by Irfan Habib, (Delhi, 2006), p. 313.

<sup>31</sup> Fr. A. Monserrate, *Commentary on his Journey to the Court of Akbar*, tr. J.S. Hoyland, ed. S.N. Bannerjee, p. 204.

<sup>32</sup> Budaq Beg, envoy of Persia, came to Delhi on 23<sup>rd</sup> May, where he presented the Shah's letter of congratulation on the Emperor's accession. A robe, a turban, a jeweled dagger, betels with a gold betel casket and tray etc. were presented to him. The mansion of Rustam Khan was assigned for his residence. Shah's presents were offered to the Emperor included 66 horses, one round pearl weighing 37 carat, and these were valued in all at 4 lakh and 22,000 rs., cf. Saqi Mustaid Khan, *Maasir-i-Alamgiri*, tr. and annotation by Jadunath Sarkar, Calcutta, 1990, p.21-22. In return, Tarbiyat Khan was sent to Iran as envoy with precious things and rarities worth seven lakhs of rupees. *ibid.*, p.29; Bernier also wrote about the arrival of an embassy of the Tartars of Uzbek, 'the presents from the Kans were brought before the king, consisting of boxes of lapis-lazuli and many loads of dry fruit.' Cf. F. Bernier,



Clearly the English were wrong in believing that the concept of an 'ambassador' was alien in the Mughal state. Understandably, they developed this idea from the kind of treatment they got from Emperor Jahangir. In their understanding, there were two possible reasons behind the treatment they received from the imperial court. One was that in the Mughal perception, England was not only a distant, but also a considerably weak country in comparison to the mighty empire of the Mughals. Jahangir believed the monarch of England to be a 'pettie prince' of a small state. William Hawkins reported that Abul Hasan, a Mughal noble, who was sent to him by the king told him that the king denied him the answer to the letter of King James saying that it 'was not the custome of so great a monarch to write in the kind of a letter into a pettie prince or governour,'<sup>33</sup>

The failure of Sir Thomas Roe in negotiating better terms of trade with the Mughals on the basis of a treaty led him to believe that the treaty was an idea 'utterly alien to the political system of

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*Travels in the Mughal Empire, 1656-68*, tr. A. Constable, p.117. For the embassy to king of Ethiopia in 1664, Aurangzeb sent an extremely rich *ser-apah*, a poniard studded with rubies; and gold and silver *roupies*. *ibid.*, p.139. In 1651, Muhyi ud Din, the ambassador from the Qaiser of Rum, Sultan Mohammad IV (1648-87)) arrived in the capital of Lahore, in return of which an Envoy to Rum, Qa'im Beg, was dispatched with a handsome robe of honour, a jeweled turban ornament sword and shield with enameled appurtenances, and a fast piebald steed with gold saddle, donation of 30,000 rupees etc. *ibid.*, pp.460-61,500.

<sup>33</sup> W. Foster (ed.), *Early Travels in India (1583-1619)*, p.92. A letter was written to James I by Jahangir but was never delivered. (*Letter Received*, vol.iii, p.285 fn. (Appendix).

Mughals.<sup>34</sup> Among the Islamic states, such interstate agreements took the form of exchange of letters, or an offer contained in the letter from one sovereign to the other.<sup>35</sup> In the Mughal view of state, treaties were only conducted among equals and entering into a treaty with the English would have meant an acceptance on their part of their alleged equal status. Moreover, the Mughals held it derogatory that 'the Emperor should sign a treaty with the representative of an obscure and distant country, especially on matters relating entirely to trade.'<sup>36</sup> That 'the Franks should send an ambassador to the imperial court was by no means unwelcome as a tribute to its splendour and fame but that they should sincerely claim to treat on terms of equality was not to be thought of.'<sup>37</sup> Roe complained in a letter to the English ambassador at Constantinople that Jahangir 'would not descend to article or bind himself reciprocally to any prince upon terms of equality, but only by way of favour admit our stay so long as it either likes him or those that govern him.'<sup>38</sup> They could not be provided with the honours and privileges that were accorded to the land based powers since they were merchants unworthy of equal treatment. Hence, Jahangir

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<sup>34</sup> Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, ed. W. Foster, p.xlii.

<sup>35</sup> As, for example, Abdullah Khan Uzbek's offer in a letter of treating the Hindukush as the 'boundary' between them, which Akbar accepted (1596). Cf. Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, Bib. Ind., Calcutta, 1873-87, vol.iii, p.705.

<sup>36</sup> Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, ed. W. Foster, p.xlii.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, p.xliii.

<sup>38</sup> *Letter Received*, vol.vi, p.298.

refused to treat Roe as an ambassador, nor would he sign a treaty with him.<sup>39</sup>

Another aspect of the Mughals' political relations with Europe is that while occasionally embassies were sent to Turkey, an East European country, embassies 'planned' for any West European country never materialized.

One such embassy planned by Akbar, apparently meant for Philip II of Spain, was postponed and later abandoned.<sup>40</sup> Likewise, an embassy to Portugal was planned by Jahangir also did not materialize.<sup>41</sup> It is important to note here that none of the West European 'embassy' even found mention in the official historical accounts. Jahangir in his memoirs did not even mention Roe!

Even with Turkey, the Mughal rulers had intermittent relations.<sup>42</sup> At Akbar's ascension to throne, Ottomans did not send a diplomatic mission to his court. Akbar, on his part, also did not

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<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*, vol.ii, p.108.

<sup>40</sup> A letter (addressed to the 'ruler of the Europeans' (*Farman Rawa-i-Farang*), i.e. Philip II. Cf. E. Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, London, 1932, p.37) was sent with Saiyid Muzaffar and Abdullah Khan along with Father Monserrate, addressed to 'the Wise Men of Christendom' (*Danayan-i-Farang*) Mar/Apr, 1582, in order to 'to promote ties with His royal Majesty (or wise men of Franks) and talked about 'obligations of a spiritual friendship.' The embassy set forth in April, 1582. It was intended to secure among other things a fresh mission of priests to Akbar's court. A copy of the letter which accompanied the embassy is still extant in the first *daftar* of the *Insha-i-Abul Fazl*. See *Maktubat-i-Allami (Insha'-i-Abul Fazl) DAFTAR I*, tr. Mansura Haider, Delhi, 1998, pp.8-10.

<sup>41</sup> *Jahangir and the Jesuits with an account of the travels of Benedict Goes and the Mission of Pegu, from the relations of Father Fernao Guerreiro*, tr. C.H. Payne, Denison Ross and Eileen Power (ed.) London, 1930, p.77.

<sup>42</sup> Naimur Rahman Farooqui, *Mughal-Ottoman Relations*, pp.4,17,23,60.

try to improve relations with them. One embassy that was sent by Akbar in 1595-6 (perhaps to congratulate Sultan Muhammad II (1595-1603) is not mentioned in any contemporary Mughal chronicle.<sup>43</sup> Jahangir was indifferent towards Ottomans and the Ottoman embassy that arrived in 1608 was denied audience. In his memoirs, Jahangir writes, 'looking to his (ambassador's) circumstances and proceedings, none of the servants of the court believed in his being an ambassador, no one could bear witness to the accuracy of his claim.'<sup>44</sup> The next embassy in 1615 also proved abortive.<sup>45</sup> After a brief friendly interlude during the period of Shahjahan, we find their relationship with the Ottomans turned sour again. Ottomans did not send congratulatory message on Aurangzeb's ascension, and Aurangzeb too did not strive to improve relations with them.<sup>46</sup>

It was realized, after a few misdemeanors by some Englishmen who posed as ambassadors that 'now (we) must hold the reputation of an ambassador.'<sup>47</sup>

The factors at Surat, while writing to Roe that 'giving due respect to an ambassador is not a custom that they follow', also point out that 'they respect the Persian ambassador because his king is a potent prince bordering on these territories, and ours far

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<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*, p.22.

<sup>44</sup> Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, ed. Syud Ahmad, vol.i, p.145.

<sup>45</sup> Thomas Roe wrote, 'the envoy was insulted and his proposal to Jahangir to desist from an anti-Ottoman alliance with the Safavid monarch, was turned down by Jahangir. Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, ed. W. Foster, p. 113. Also see Naimur Rahman Farooqui, *Mughal-Ottoman Relations*, p.23.

<sup>46</sup> Naimur Rahman Farooqui, *Mughal-Ottoman Relations*, p.60.

<sup>47</sup> *Letter Received*, vol. ii, p.261.

off, whose greatness is scarcely known or not believed.’<sup>48</sup> In 1616, factors at Surat wrote to Thomas Roe that there is no usual custom to whom they give due respect. The king of Persia his ambassador speaks in his own person free with what liberty he pleaseth, otherwise he will not endure it, where in we can not but acknowledge the causes are different, he being a potent prince bordering on these territories, and ours far off, whose greatnesss is scarcely known or believed.”<sup>49</sup> Similarly, in 1617, William Lesk wrote to the East India Company that “in the Mogull his country, my lord ambassador lives as he can, although his entertainment be nothing answerable either to the worth of the man or honour of his employment. For there be two things which make ambassadors gracious and acceptable in the eyes of foreign princes; a necessary relation and reference between the two kingdoms, or some great utility and profit redounding from one to the other; both which are greatly wanting in our particular.”<sup>50</sup> In the Mughal polity, the exchange of ambassadors took place among equal powers. The Mughal Court offered honourable and respectful treatment only to those ambassadors that were sent by the mighty Empires of Asia—the Safavids or the Uzbeks, for instance. The dignitaries that were sent by petty political powers did not merit any special treatment, for that could jeopardize the imperial pretensions of the Mughal sovereignty. In Mughal perception, the English were just one such petty power, and their representative at the court, therefore, could not be offered anything beyond the ordinary courtesies. Jahangir,

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<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*, vol.iv, p.310.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*, vol. v, p.176.

for example, was reportedly 'so pleased with his visitor (Hawkins) that he pressed him to remain as a resident ambassador, promising in that case to permit English trade with his ports on favourable terms. To this Hawkins readily agreed; whereupon he was made captain of four hundred horse, with a handsome allowance. He was even married to an Armenian maiden, and took his place among the grandees of the court. But Jahangir soon got tired of this 'troublesome visitor' and he was asked to leave the court. Even his request to an answer for a letter from king James I was 'contemptuously refused',<sup>51</sup> and so also was forgotten the idea of sending an 'ambassador to the King of England at the coming of next shipping.'<sup>52</sup> Similarly, when Roe appeared before Jahangir in 1616, he was freely granted leave to use the customs of his country.<sup>53</sup> Similar privilege was given to the Dutch envoy who performed salam in the Indian fashion before Aurangzeb, but the latter himself desired from him '*a salute a la Frank*',<sup>54</sup> after which *Morturacan* (Murtaza Khan) took the letter from the hands of the ambassador and presented it to the secretary (i.e. the *wazir*). The master of the ceremonies, with his gold cane in his hand, took the ambassador's hand, and placed him in a fairly honourable place along with the five persons who accompanied him. They were

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<sup>51</sup> *Early Travels in India 1583-1619*, ed. W. Foster, pp.64, 67.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*, p.82.

<sup>53</sup> Roe writes that entering the durbar, he made three successive 'reverences' in the 'European manner,' cf. *Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe*, p. 87, where Jahangir told his officers not to insist that Roe should perform '*size-da*' (*sijda*), *ibid.*, p. 214.

<sup>54</sup> F. Bernier, *Travels in the Mughal Empire, 1656-68*, tr. A. Constable, p. 127.

invested with a *sarapa* of brocade.<sup>55</sup> In 1688, to the Dutch ambassador, Mr. Bald, during his stay was given many marks of favour, honoured him with the title of *Golzarcán* (Gulzar Khan, that is, 'Great and flourishing') and at length sent him away with a properly executed *farman*, which granted privileges which they had asked for.<sup>56</sup>

Roe himself observed that, 'the Kings bountyes are rather markes of honor then of profit'<sup>57</sup> for the ambassador's reason of arrival was not one of usual political contact (but the need for trade concessions). The second reason for their indifferent attitude perhaps lies in the fact that the English in India were essentially merchants, and in the Mughal perception the representatives of merchants could not be accorded ambassadorial status. It was the interest of the English merchants trading in Mughal India that was the main objective of Roe's embassy and in the land-based polity of the Mughals, trading was a profession which was held in 'great contempt.'<sup>58</sup> Jahangir on one occasion wondered as to why the king of England sent a merchant, 'a meane man (Edwards) with more curious toys and then sent Roe as his ambassador who was so slightly set out,'<sup>59</sup> the Mogull doubtlesse making judgement of what His Majestie is by what he sends.'<sup>60</sup> Jahangir's friendly

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<sup>55</sup> Niccolao Manucci, *Storia Do Mogor, 1656-1712*, tr. W. Irvine, vol.i, p.57.

<sup>56</sup> *ibid.*, p.358.

<sup>57</sup> Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, ed. W. Foster, p.310)

<sup>58</sup> *Letter Received*, vol.ii, pp.136,138.

<sup>59</sup> Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, ed. W. Foster, p.351-2.

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*, p.76.

attitude towards Roe was more a matter of personal liking and cordial behaviour than the marker of any possible diplomatic relation between him and the English king or a respectful acceptance of his ambassadorial status. (It is no accident that Roe's embassy did not even find mention in his memoirs, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*).

It appears that in the Mughal perception: a) England was a small and weak country and no match to the great empires of the Islamic world such as the Safavids, Ottomans, and indeed the Mughals, b) the representatives of the English and other West European countries in India were essentially merchants and could not, therefore be treated as political authorities, irrespective of any ambassador claiming to represent the sovereign of England, and c) since they were merchants, their status was an inferior one and the Mughal court could not accord an ambassadorial status to any English or European representative/agent in India. It does not seem that this perception changed in the subsequent period as even at the end of 17<sup>th</sup> century, in the instructions given to William Norris on his appointment as an ambassador to the Mughal emperor on 31 Dec.1698, the English king urged him to 'pressure honour and dignity of ambassador.' In the course of negotiations, when Ruh-ullah Khan sought information about Europe, he gave him information also about reception of ambassadors, stating that in Europe a representative of a sovereign would meet at boundary of nation to conduct him to royal presence, and, whenever ambassador demanded audience, it was granted.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Harihar Das, *The Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb, 1699-1702*, (Calcutta, 1959)



When Sir Thomas Roe arrived at Surat in 1615, his difficulties with local officials who were not clear about his status, were resolved once a farman arrived from the court which, according to Roe, 'contayned a command to all governors of provinces or towns to attend me with sufficient guard and not to meddle with anything that was mine.'<sup>62</sup> In 1701, when the Norris embassy (sent by William III on behalf of the New English East India Company) arrived, he was neither received well nor was he able to meet the Emperor for quite sometime. (Norris had landed at Masulipatam on September 25<sup>th</sup>, 1699, he reached Swally (Surat) on Dec.10, 1700, and proceeded thence to the Mughal camp via Burhanpur.<sup>63</sup> And when he did try to meet Aurangzeb who was at a camp against Marathas, 'none of the high officials received Norris at the entrance to the *lashkar* beating of drum or sounding of trumpet were also not allowed.'<sup>64</sup> Norris was advised (by Yar Ali Beg) not to ask for *farman* at first presence, but only convey to Emperor letters of king and list of presents.

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p.77, 308. The ambassadors from the Islamic empires of Asia, on the other hand were given due acknowledgement. See Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol.i, pp.298,299,336,374; vol.ii, p.178; *The Shahjahan Nama of Inayat Khan*, W.E. Begley and Z.A. Desai (eds.), P.87, 460,499; F. Bernier, *Travels in the Mughal Empire, 1656-68*, p.147.

<sup>62</sup> Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, ed. W. Foster, p. 65.

<sup>63</sup> Niccolao Manucci, *Storia Do Mogor, 1656-1712*, vol.ii, p.355-56.

<sup>64</sup> *ibid.*, P.289. The ambassadors from the Islamic empires of Asia were given due permission to depart along with a letter to their Emperor and handsome presents. *ibid.*, p.309.

Norris quitted the Mughal camp without permission on Nov. 5, 1701 (and sailed for England on May 5, 1702) although Manucci notes that 'never had an ambassador from Europe appeared with such pomp and magnificence,'<sup>65</sup> the fact remains that he had not received a treatment befitting an ambassador and his mission had failed.

In the Islamic empires, the rulers exchanged ambassadors on such occasions as the coronation of a new king or victory in an expedition. The Iranian ambassador Mohammad Ali Beg, for example, delivered a letter from Shah Safi the ruler of Iran, full of congratulations on His Majesty's accession to throne; and received in return a gold-embroidered robe of honour, and a *Qizilbashi* tiara and turban ornament studded with gems.<sup>66</sup> In return of Mohammad Ali Beg's embassy, the Emperor determined to dispatch an embassy under Safdar Khan, entrusted him 4 lakhs for the purchase of presents for the Shah, towards end of Shawwal 1042 (early May 1633) a letter describing the victories that had been achieved by the imperial armies during his reign and informing about capture of fort of Daulatabad.<sup>67</sup> When news of Shah Safi's death arrived, Dara asked to send on Khan Dauran Bahadur Nusrat Jang and Said Khan Bahadur Zafar Jang with 30,000 men to Qandahar, after corroborating his death, he reported the matter to court.<sup>68</sup> The Mughals clearly did not have such a convention with any of the European powers. By way of an exception, we find one Adrian, a

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<sup>65</sup> Niccolao Manucci, *Storia Do Mogor, 1656-1712*, vol.iii, p.285.

<sup>66</sup> *The Shahjahan Nama of Inayat Khan*, W.E. Begley and Z.A. Desai (eds.), p.62.

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, p.94.

<sup>68</sup> *ibid.*, p.294.

Dutch ambassador, arriving in Delhi to 'offer congratulations on the king's accession.' However, he was not sent by the king of Holland, but by the Governor of Batavia in 1662 to obtain trade concessions.<sup>69</sup>

The exchange of gifts was a recognized part of the formal etiquette in Islamic empires. Humayun wrote about an embassy sent by 'the sovereign of Rum, Soleyman the Magnificent' to Persia and exchange of 'various valuable and curious articles: such as, instruments and vessels inlaid with the gold and precious stones, daggers, scimitars, cloths of different kinds, and rarities from the several countries of Europe.'<sup>70</sup>

The value of the gifts sent was an index of the importance that was given to the recipient by the sovereign who sent it.<sup>71</sup> Exchange of gifts was indeed an important aspect of the Mughal political system,<sup>72</sup> but the connotations of each exchange varied from one situation to another. The gifts received from political powers, such as Safavids or the Uzbegs represented ritual and political relations, and signified reciprocal acceptance of sovereign

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<sup>69</sup> They succeeded in getting a *farman* 'favourable to their commerce in Bengal, Orissa and Patnah' (this *farman* was dated October, 29, 1662. F. Bernier, *Travels in the Mughal Empire, 1656-68*, p.127; Niccolao Manucci, *Storia Do Mogor, 1656-1712*, vol.i, p.57.

<sup>70</sup> Jauhar Aftabchi, *Tazkira-ul-Waqiat*, tr. Charles Stewart, p.123.

<sup>71</sup> Roe commented that 'the Mogull doubtlesse making judgement of what His Majestie is by what he sends.' Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.76.

<sup>72</sup> The English developed friendly relationship with the nobles and members of the imperial household through gifts and presents. (Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.xxxvii, p.426; *Letters Received*, vol.vi, p.xxii).

authority.<sup>73</sup> On the other hand, the gifts received from the English did not symbolize a relationship or an 'alliance,' as it were, but were usually considered as 'curioities' offered to the Mughals in exchange of trading concessions. For example, William Hawkins once wrote that he had great hope that 'the king would performe former grants in hope of rare things that should come from England.'<sup>74</sup> Roe in 1616 writes that 'he took to Prince khurram 'some powerfull wine and in the strength thereof desired justice, within a few days the prince had signed two *farmans* (*nishans*)'<sup>75</sup> Jahangir on one occasion wondered as to why Roe was 'so slightly set out.'<sup>76</sup> Interestingly, when Roe sent him 'a clock and other trifles, Jahangir looked at them curiously and asked what he requires of him.'<sup>77</sup> Manucci writes that 'since he (the Dutch ambassador, who arrived at Delhi in 1662 to Aurangzeb's court) knew that those who bring the largest present and the heaviest purse are the most acceptable, the best received and soonest attended to, he brought a present, for the king. It consisted in a large quantity of very fine scarlet broadcloth, much fine green cloth, some large mirrors, many earthenware dishes, bric-a-brac

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<sup>73</sup> On the gifts brought by Persian embassies to Jahangir and Aurangzeb, see Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, pp. 262-3; F. Bernier, *Travels in the Mughal Empire, 1656-68*, pp. 147-8. For the gifts carried by Khan Azam's embassy to Persia, see Riazul Islam, *Indo-Persian Relations; a Study of Political and Diplomatic Relations between the Mughal Empire and Iran*, Tehran, 1970, pp. 74, 233; *The Shahjahan Nama of Inayat Khan*, W.E. Begley and Z.A. Desai (eds.), p. 63, 72.

<sup>74</sup> *Early Travels in India 1583-1619*, ed. W. Foster, p.91.

<sup>75</sup> Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.xxxvii.

<sup>76</sup> *ibid.*, p.351-2.

<sup>77</sup> *ibid.*, p.94n.

from China and Japan, and a small throne in appearance like a litter (*cherolla*), a piece of Japanese work with many pleasing paintings. For the ministers there was a large sum in gold and silver, with different kinds of cloth and other *bric-a-brac*. As soon as he arrived he began to set forth to the ministers what he desired. Thus in a few days leave was granted to him to be presented to the king.<sup>78</sup> In 1701, the English ambassador, Norris was advised (by Yar Ali Beg) not to ask for *farman* at first presence. But only convey to Emperor letters of king and list of presents.<sup>79</sup>

While Jahangir mentions gifts sent by the Persian king, (he, for example, wrote that 'Shah Abbas sent me a cup of Venetian workmanship'),<sup>80</sup> he does not mention any gift sent by any European power. The gifts brought by European embassies were symbolically less significant in comparison to those sent by neighbouring Islamic empires and hence, failed to impress the Emperor.

During Akbar's period, only one work dealing with Europe was written at Akbar's orders called '*Samarat al-falasifah*,' (also known as *Ahval-i Frangistan*) compiled by 'Abd al-Sattar with the help of Jerome Xavier (who taught him European languages) in 1603. But even this work dealt with West's philosophical past. This work was concerned with the history of the Roman Empire (*Salatin-i-Rum*), with special reference to its rulers, saints and philosophers (along with the sayings of Greek and Roman philosophers), including the life of Christ. There was no attempt to

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<sup>78</sup> Niccolao Manucci, *Storia Do Mogor, 1656-1712*, vol.i, p.57.

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*, p.309.

<sup>80</sup> Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol.i, p.310.

include any contemporary account of European Kings or nations. Here, their ideological fascination with the ancient Roman and Greek civilization and philosophers and their initial fascination with European religion is evident. Also, till the Jesuit influence was predominant, their primary interest was in their religion and philosophy, and not their political system.

After Akbar's period, as the trading companies of different European nations, apart from the Portuguese, started settling in the Mughal Empire and their interaction with these diverse European merchants expanded, their knowledge about the Western European nations also started growing. Even so, the textual knowledge among Muslim scholars was mainly confined to the Eastern Europe.<sup>81</sup> They occasionally evinced some interest in West European countries, but their knowledge of these countries was fragmentary and at best, insufficient and incomplete as their source of knowledge was exclusively derived from the conversations they had with the Europeans in India.<sup>82</sup>

Nevertheless, the Mughal elite began to evince some interest in things from Europe during the seventeenth century, as some knowledge would have disseminated through Persian translations. For the major part, the information about events in Europe was given by the ambassadors. Alexander Hamilton in c.1690 wrote that 'the Dutch Company had one Mr. Baroon as their ambassador,

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<sup>81</sup> Father Jerome Xavier composed in 1609, a work called *Adab-us-Saltanat* (pride of kings). (Ms. at School of Oriental Studies in London). This work, dedicated to Jahangir, contained information on Christianity, Roman kings and Plutarch (*Tarjuma-i-Plutarko*, *Maqulat-i-Plutarko*), Cicero (*Ba'ze muqaddamat-i- Marko Tulio*), cf. E. Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, p.215. Also see Amin Ahmad Razi, *Haft Iqlim*, 3 vols., Tehran, n.d.

<sup>82</sup> *Early Travels in India 1583-1619*, ed. W. Foster, pp.64,82.

who designed to impose on Aurangzeb, who he thought was ignorant of European affairs, the news of revolution in Britain being arrived in India when he had an audience with Aurangzeb, he began to magnify the power and grandeur of his country, and vilify the English. The Mogul seemed to be pleased with his discourse and encouraged him to go on. He told that the English were but contemptible in comparison of his sovereigns,<sup>83</sup> on which Aurangzeb reprimanded him saying that he knew that about seventeen years ago (referring to 1645), the king of France conquered most of their country in a few days and it was the power of English and not the power of Holland that repelled them, and that if England did not hold the balance of power, either the Emperor or the king of France could conquer it in one campaign.<sup>84</sup> In the course of negotiations, Ruh-ullah Khan, a noble of Aurangzeb, sought information from William Norris, the English ambassador, about the kings of Europe and the races over which they ruled, presumably in order to ascertain the relative position of the King of England. He told him of the superiority of English navy and explained that some of the European peoples were governed by their elected rulers, and all of them were Christians with different sects and languages.<sup>85</sup>

According to Bernier, Aurangzeb once said to his teacher Mulla Jiwan Amethawi (d. 1717) that his youth had been wasted in learning outmoded philosophy instead of a subject like 'the rise and

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<sup>83</sup> Alexander Hamilton, *A New Account of The East Indies*, 2 vols., ed. W. Foster, London, 1930, p.225.

<sup>84</sup> *ibid.*, p.226.

<sup>85</sup> H.H. Das, *The Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb*, p.308.

fall of a state, more suitable for a prince's education'. He said, 'You taught me that the whole of Franguistan (Europe) was no more than some inconsiderable island, of which the most powerful Monarch was formerly the king of Portugal, then he of Holland, and afterward the king of England. In regard to the other sovereigns of Franguistan, such as the king of France and of him of Andalusia, you told me they resembled our petty *rajas*, and that the potentates of Hindoustan eclipsed the glory of other kings; and that Persia, Uzbek, Kachguer, Tartary, and Catay (Cathay or China), Pegu, Siam, China and Matchina (China), trembled at the name of the kings of the Indies. Was it not incumbent upon my preceptor to make me acquainted with distinguishing features of the every nation of the earth; its resources and strength; its mode of warfare, its manners, religion, form of government and wherein its interests principally exist; and by a regular course of historical reading, to render me familiar with the origin of states, their progress and decline; the events, accidents, or errors, owing to which such great changes and mighty revolutions, have been effected? Far from having imparted to me a profound and comprehensive knowledge of the history of mankind, scarcely did I learn from you the names of my ancestors.'<sup>86</sup> Clearly then, by the time we come to Aurangzeb's reign, we notice a much broader, and far more mature, understanding of Europe and its peoples. There is, in Aurangzeb's disquiet a realization that Europe was an important place after all, worthy of sustained study.

But apart from these stray incidents, we do not have any evidence to suggest that there had occurred any significant advance

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<sup>86</sup> F. Bernier, *Travels in the Mughal Empire, 1656-68*, p.155.



in the information about European political structure. Mohammad Shafi (a writer and historian of Muhammad Shah's reign, writing in 1730s)<sup>87</sup> wrote about Pope having complete religious and political control over kings of all Christendom. (All of these rulers, according to Shafi, owed allegiance to the Pope (*Papa*), who exercised authority over them in his capacity as the representative of Jesus Christ (*Na'ib-i Hazrat 'ha*). These kings were under his complete control and the kings would not raise their voice nor think of revolt (*inhiraf*); in fact any disobedience to the Pope was simply out of the question. He had the right to appoint them as well as to dismiss them. The kings of Europe were so completely subservient (*ghulam zar kharid*) to the Papal authority, that, even if the Pope wished to install a common man (*awam al-nass*) on the throne). As he mentions, almost the whole of Europe (*Frangistan*) was governed by sixteen magnificent kings: nine out of these were known as *qaral*, while seven were called *frangi*.<sup>88</sup>

Writing in 1730, Muhammad Shafi' Warid, also had some knowledge of the Roman Emperor, whose seat of residence was close to the Pope. All the rulers of Europe, with the exception of the Hungarian one, paid tribute (*baj u kharaj*) to the Holy Roman Emperor. He recalls that the other part of Europe, Vienna and Hungary once were conquered by the Ottomans.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Muhammad Shafi Warid, '*Ajaib al Buldan*, Pers. Ms. Ousley 213.(Bodlien Library, (Oxford) London), f.24, 25b, ff.28b. cf. Gulfishan Khan, *Indian Muslim Perception of the West during the Eighteenth Century*, p.43.

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.*

To conclude, the Mughal perception of the European political system was an evolving one, and shifted across the Mughal period. Even so, they were scarcely aware of the political, social and economic developments occurring in Europe at the time, and treated it as marginal to their political concerns. The Europeans who sent their embassies to the court were disappointed in finding that for the Mughals they were unworthy of equal status, or even of the respect they saw the Mughals extending to the Safavid and the Ottoman embassies. In the Mughal perception, the Europeans came from a place that was socially and culturally inferior not only to the Mughal Empire but also the other Asian empires in the Islamic world-the Safavids, the Ottomans and the Uzbeks.

### **CHAPTER III:**

- (i) Mughal views on Science and rationalism**
- (ii) Mughal response to European technology and nature of response**

### **Mughal views on science and rationalism**

Mughal perception of European science and technology was crucially determined by the Islamic heritage. The Mughal understanding of scientific thought was based on the influence of Hellenic and Hellenistic thought in the Islamic civilization. In the Muslim world, the growing influence of the Mutazalites, the Qadarites, and several other schools of rational thought, had helped create conditions for the favourable reception of Greek thought among the Muslim intellectuals and educated elites. Of course the role of Abbasid state was hugely significant, for without their patronage, Hellenic and Hellenistic ideas would scarcely have gained ground in the Islamic world.

Within Islam, there were two schools with respect to Greek learning. The first was the Hermetic-Pythagorean school. It was metaphysical in approach, based on divine rather than human knowledge. It became an influential component of Islamic philosophy, much more than the second school i.e. the syllogistic-rationalistic school of the followers of Aristotle (which remained secondary). Some of the former's cosmological beliefs were integrated into Sufism. It also influenced the Ismailis who believed that 'receiving information' from a learned and credible informant alone was knowledge, and placed divine knowledge, above human intellect and reason. While in the Islamic world, Pythagoreanism led to metaphysical thought, in Europe it conveyed a vision of a harmonious geometric universe e.g. Copernicus.

The other component of Islamic thought was the 'atomistic' school of thought which flourished in tenth century, which was represented by the Ash'arites (who denied the Aristotelian notion

of causality and believed in strict consequentiality).

Apart from these, there were two other schools professing to follow the Greek philosophers. One was the Peripatetic school, whose doctrines were a combination of the ideas of Aristotle and of some Neoplatonists. Their approach was philosophical rather than metaphysical. While their thought was the bedrock of the scientific revolution in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries in Europe, it remained a secondary aspect of Muslim intellectual life. Great figures of Arab science such as Al-Kindi, Averroes (Ibn Rushd), al-Razi (Rhazes), Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and al-Beruni were some of the representatives of this school.

The other school which was more sympathetic to the Pythagorean-Platonic school than to Aristotelian tradition was later called *Ishraqi* (Illuminatist) school. Its literature was primarily symbolic, in which they would see 'signs' in nature's phenomena, as a guide to the final 'illumination.' Its enigmatic approach later attracted many Sufis who took up its ideas. The former school was strong during the tenth and eleventh centuries after which their influence weakened. In comparison, the Ishraqi creed became stronger after twelfth century, mainly under Al Ghazali's influence.

The growth of rationalism suffered a setback in the eleventh century, when works as *Qabus Nama* and *Siyasat Nama* of Nizam-ul-mulk Tusi were written. In these works, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle were admitted to the status of Islamic sages, and came to be uncritically appropriated in the Islamic world. Despite the fact that Tusi ascribed romances and parables to the Greek philosophers, such as Plato and Aristotle enhancing their reputation among Muslims, their philosophic heritage was never integrated into the body-politic of orthodox Sunni or Shi'i Islam. The remark

of celebrated mystic Ibn al 'Arabi (l 1165-1240) that 'religion is based on the law of Mohammad, whereas the philosophers' trend of thought follows Hermetic traditions, clearly delineates the difference between the two branches of thought.'<sup>1</sup>

Islamic interest in technology seems to have reached its apex with al-Jazari (1204-6)<sup>2</sup> Before Jazari, Ibn 'Ali Sina (Avicenna, d. 1037), Al beruni (d. 1030) and Ibn Rushd (Averroes, d. 1198) were the greatest representatives of the Muslim interest in science. But post-Al Jazari science received a setback throughout the Islamic world.

In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, there was a heavy onslaught on reason (*ma'qulat*) and philosophy (*falsafa*), in which Ghazali (d. 1111) played an important part. He counteracted the influence of Avicenna and his followers, and he wrote "*Tahafut al-Falasifa*" (The incoherence of the philosophers) in which he strongly refuted their belief in the eternity of the world and their views on the nature of God. He denounced the Muslim followers of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle as unbelievers. He concluded his work with the remark that philosophers were guilty of infidelity.<sup>3</sup> Al-Ghazali in a way paved the way for the theological victory of Asha'ri determinism(which denied any connection between cause and effect, and therefore held that any kind of prediction is impossible), over Muta'zali rationalism. He repeatedly argued the scientific

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<sup>1</sup> S.A.A. Rizvi, *Religious and intellectual History of the Muslims in Akbar's Reign*, N. Delhi, 1975, p.10.

<sup>2</sup> Its translation is available in Ibn al Razzaz al-Jazari, *The book of Ingenious Mechanical Contrivances*, tr. Donald R. Hill, Dordrecht, 1974.cf. Irfan Habib, *Reason and Science in Medieval India*, p.173n.

<sup>3</sup> Ghazali, *Tahafut al-Falasifah*, Egypt, 1958, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., p. 29.

rationalism was the belief that materialism as well as disciplines of mathematics, natural science and medicine could all lead to unbelief and atheism. Al-Razi, Abul Barkat and Al- Amidi also carried on a severely damaging attack on Greek philosophy.

The growing influence of Sufism also caused a setback to development of scientific and rational thinking. It stressed on intense religious consciousness and suggested that logic and reasoning were futile for a fulfilling spiritual life. The philosophy of Shaikh Shihabu'd Din Suhrawardi Maqtul(1155-1191) known as *Hikmat-ul-Ishraq* (philosophy of illumination) sought to integrate 'Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy with Hermetic ideas and placed 'the whole structure within the context of Sufism,'<sup>4</sup> thereby blurring the distinction between Sufism and philosophy (*falsafa*).<sup>5</sup>

There were contradictory trends, as well, and some rulers of the Sultanate period, especially Mohammad Bin Tughlaq and Firoz Shah Tughlaq made serious efforts for the promotion of rational thought.<sup>6</sup> Barani persistently condemned the *falasifa* (he has written against philosophers such as Najm Intishar, Sa'd and Maulana ' Alimu'd Din, some of whom were patronized by the earlier reigns of the Sultans of Delhi<sup>7</sup> in particular the Avicennians<sup>8</sup> and showed contempt towards the Mutazilites.

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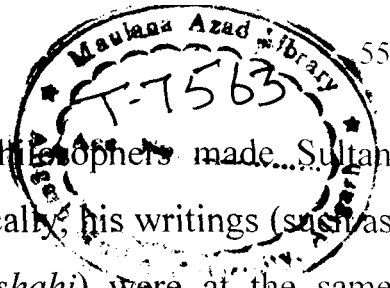
<sup>4</sup> S.A.A. Rizvi, *Religious and intellectual History of the Muslims in Akbar's Reign*, p.40.

<sup>5</sup> Ishraqi philosophy is expressed in *Kitab Hikmat-al Ishraq* (the philosophy of illumination) and other works. For the essential facts of Shihabuddin's life, see *An encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. IV, pp.119-20. For an insightful short interpretation, see Roy Mottahedeh, *The Mantle of the Prophet Religion and Politics in Iran*, New York, 1985, p. 149.

<sup>6</sup> Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi*, Calcutta, 1860-62, p.35.

<sup>7</sup> S.A.A. Rizvi, *Religious and intellectual History of the Muslims in Akbar's Reign*, p.12.

<sup>8</sup> Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi*, p. 35.



According to him, the influence of philosophers made... Sultan ruthless, cruel and irreligious.<sup>9</sup> Paradoxically, his writings (such as *Fatawa-i-Jahandari* and *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi*) were at the same time, not devoid of reason, and he even quoted from Aristotle and Plato's writings. However, as Professor Irfan Habib argued that he offers a case 'where the subterranean persistence of rationalism through the continued survival of philosophy reasserted itself in an indirect manner, while the ever changing patterns of the historical process forced a fresh examination of received notions. But Barani had no successor and if anything the resources of reason that he was still able to invoke seem to have dwindled after him.'<sup>10</sup>

By the time the Mughals established their rule in India, science and rationalism had been marginalized from intellectual life. Abu'l Fazl, the principal ideologue of Akbar's period, at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century was to mourn "the blowing of the heavy wind of *taqlid* (tradition), and the dimming of the lamp of wisdom. The door of "how" and "why" has been closed; and questioning and enquiry have been fruitless and tantamount to paganism."<sup>11</sup>

He probably stands out in the effort to develop rational sciences in India. He emphasized his respect for the Hellenistic sciences and favourably cited the works of classical Islamic rational philosophers. He even suggested that the absence of the spirit of *sulh-i kul* (peace with all) in India was caused mainly by the preponderance of an attitude of imitation (*taqlid*) and by the suppression of intellect and reason.<sup>12</sup> Abul Fazl severely criticized al-Ghazali for condemning sciences that were not manifestly based

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<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, p.467.

<sup>10</sup> Irfan Habib, *Reason and Science in Medieval India*, p. 166.

<sup>11</sup> Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. iii, p.3.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, pp.3-4.



upon the Quran.<sup>13</sup> His monumental work *Ain-i-Akbari* is written within a rational and scientific frame of reference. In the book, he even discusses the theories on the propagation of sound, light, specific gravity. An evaluation of these theories reveals the persistent influence of Aristotelian philosophy on Mughal rationalism.

In the early seventies, Abul Fazl along with his father Shaikh Mubarak and his brother, Faizi, were the among the most prominent people who introduced Emperor Akbar to an Islamized version of Greek Philosophy. Akbar was so charmed by their philosophical discourses (*sukhnan-i-hikmat*), so strongly disapproved by post-Ghazali Islamic theology and found them so enchanting that he 'found it difficult to keep away from them.'<sup>14</sup> However, the apparent revival of science at Akbar's court was not backed or reinforced by any general system or systems of rational philosophy.<sup>15</sup> Even Shaikh Mubarak who had introduced Akbar to Greek philosophy is said to have been greatly inclined to the Ishraqi creed of Shihabuddin Suhrawardi Maqtul.<sup>16</sup> As Prof. Irfan Habib opined, the tolerance of science at Akbar's court stemmed not so much from a belief in reason as from a belief in Pantheism (the doctrines of Ibn al-Arabi (d.1240) had reached India around 1400 A.D.), which taught one to respect diversity. However, pantheism which had in the sixteenth century provided an umbrella for the revival of classical science became, in the seventeenth, a

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<sup>13</sup> Muhammad Hashim Kishmi, *Zubdat-al-Maqamat*, Lucknow, A.H. 1302, p. 131.

<sup>14</sup> Abul Fazl, *Ain-Akbari*, vol iii, pp. 182-3.

<sup>15</sup> Irfan Habib, *Capacity of Change in the technology of Mughal India*, Seminar on 'Technology in Medieval India Century,' September, 1984, BITM, Calcutta, p.25.

<sup>16</sup> S.A.A. Rizvi, *Religious and intellectual History of the Muslims in Akbar's Reign*, p.80.

source for the rejection of science and revival of religion.<sup>17</sup> In the sixteenth century, the Mahdavi movement had attained considerable success; and it was certainly a consciously 'revisionist' doctrine.

The Mughal elites were aware of the atomistic philosophy of Leucippos and Democritos, for their works had been translated into Arabic by early Arab scholars such as al-Kindi. However a new interpretation of this idea suddenly acquired prominence as a result of the translation provided by Fr. Bernier of the works of Pierre Gassendi (1592-1655). The attempts by Gassendi to reconcile mechanistic atomism with Christian belief in immortality, free will and the existence of an infinite God and therefore infinite creation were taken up by the man who was to assume immense importance in the eighteenth century, as the author of the syllabus for the students of the *Dars-i-Nizamiya*, namely Qazi Muhibullah Bihari. Bihari's treatise on the *Djuz la yataadjuzza* meaning an indivisible particle was completed just a few years after the works of Gassendi had been circulated by Bernier and Danishmand Khan among the Mughal elites and ruling classes. Muhibullah Bihari also went on to write his *Risala* (treatise) on time, and on motion-both of which became standard textbooks for the students of Shaikh Qutbuddin Sahalvi, whose son Nizamuddin went on to devise the new syllabus called *Dars-i-Nizamia*, followed as the curriculum in the Firangi Mahal.<sup>18</sup> The emphasis on Greek logic and reasoning in the *Dars-i-Nizamia* led several mullahs of Awadh and Delhi to denounce it as being anti-

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<sup>17</sup> Irfan Habib, *Reason and Science in Medieval India*, 1996, p. 171.

<sup>18</sup> See for details F.C. Robinson, *The Ulema of the Firangi Mahal-Islamic Culture in South East Asia*, New Delhi, 2001.

private curriculum of Shah Waliullah (1702-1762) was relatively wider in scope and included some amount of mathematics, astronomy, and medicine. But himself a chishti *sufi* of Delhi, he also rejected the rational sciences.<sup>19</sup> The important point that is often not realized is that the *dars-i-Nizami*, which became the standard curriculum for most *madrasas* in the Mughal period, was influenced by the European intellectual contacts with the Mughal elites. It was after all owing to the influence of Bernier that Gassendi's ideas found favourable reception in the curriculum of the period. It is also important to realize that the Mughal intellectual engagement with such Europeans as Bernier shaped the reception of Greek thought. While Greek *falsafa* remained important in the *madarasa* education, it had been modified, in bits and pieces, by the creative engagement of the Europeans with the Mughal intellectual class.

Under Mutazilite Caliphs in Baghdad the adoption of rationalism led to the flourishing of the sciences through the Islamic academy of science "*Bayet al-Hikma*." In the seventh century, physicians made great contributions and were the pioneers of medicine in the Arabic society. Translations were made of books on medicine from foreign languages, even officially, into Arabic. Hunain b. Ishaq (194-264 A.H.) officially translated books of Hippocrates and Galen, and wrote down many medical books among which is his famous one on Ophthalmology was called *Al Ashr Maqalat fi al-'Ayn*, which is considered to be the first scientific attempt towards Ophthalmology.

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<sup>19</sup> Muhammad Raza Ansari, *Bani-Dars-i-Nizami*, Lucknow. Cf. I.G.Khan, *The evolution of Science and Technology in Early Modern Northern India and the Role of French, c.1750-1820*, IHC, Papers from the Aligarh Historians Society, 2001, p.107.

Like other subjects, the medical science at Mughal court was also under overwhelming influence of Greek medicine called Unani tibb, into which were also incorporated the achievements of Arab scientists. Fathullah Shirazi, an Iranian scientist at Akbar's court, was also a follower of Greek legacy. He translated the famous *Qanun* of Abu Ali Sina (Avicenna) into Persian.<sup>20</sup> Later commentaries on Ibn Sina's *Qanun* were written, e.g. by one Hakim Ali Gilani entitled *Sharh-i-Qanun-i-Ibn Sina* in 5 volumes,<sup>21</sup> Shaikh Ahmud Qunnuji's (c.1700) *Tuhfat-ul Atibba* etc.<sup>22</sup> to count only a few.

The Mughal elites were reluctant in trying anything which was not prescribed by the Greeco-Arab authoritative texts. In 1603, for example, a discussion was held on the use of tobacco. In this year Asad Beg Qazwini brought to the court from Bijapur a small sample of tobacco and a smoking pipe for the emperor. When Akbar showed an inclination to smoke, he was sought to be dissuaded by Hakim Ali Gilani, who argued that as nothing was mentioned regarding tobacco in 'our medical books', it would be risky to use it without making further investigations.<sup>23</sup> While one may not disapprove in principle of the advice that Hakim Ali Gilani gave on the occasion, one cannot help noting the basis of the *hakim's* argument. For him nothing was permissible that was not sanctioned by the texts of unani tibb handed down by the great masters of earlier times. This obviously applied to the new ideas

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<sup>20</sup> *Tarjuma-i Kitab-ul Qanun*, MS., Riza Library, Rampur, No. 1272.

<sup>21</sup> Jauhar Aftabchi, *Tazkira-ul-Waqiat*, p.168.

<sup>22</sup> Shah Nawaz Khan, *Maasir-al-Umara*, ed. Abdur Rahim and Ashraf AM, Bib. Ind., 3 vols., Calcutta, 1888-91, vol. 2, part 2, p.196.

<sup>23</sup> Asad Beg, *Ahwal-i Asad Beg Qazwini*, MS. BM. OR. 1996 (Rotograph in Department of History, Aligarh Muslim University), ff. 36-37.

regarding medicine that were coming at this time from the West. Asad Beg says that when he brought tobacco from Bijapur, the Emperor tried it, but Gilani dissuaded him. Asad Beg said that Europeans are not so foolish as not to know about it. There are wise men among them who seldom err or commit mistakes, for which the physician representative said that 'we do not want to follow Europeans and adopt a custom which is not sanctioned by our wise men without trial.'<sup>24</sup> After considerable reluctance, tobacco came to be used as medicine.<sup>25</sup> However, this was only an exception, and we do not find similar examples during the rest of the Mughal period. Akbar allegedly approved of a scheme for building a hospital and initiating what would be called a 'medical mission.' This, perhaps, did not materialize, for nothing about it is mentioned in either Jesuit accounts, or Mughal chronicles.<sup>26</sup>

The Indian physicians or *hakims* were apparently unaware of European advances in medical science. This is borne out from the accounts left behind by European travelers.<sup>27</sup> This was despite the

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<sup>24</sup> O.P.Jaggi, *Medicine in Medieval India*, vol.8, 1981, Delhi, p.157.

<sup>25</sup> Jauhar Aftabchi, *Tazkira-ul-Waqiat*, p.168, and since 1600 tobacco was one of the main imports. (Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, p.102).

<sup>26</sup> E. Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, p.33.

<sup>27</sup> Manucci firmly believed that '*tabibs* had no knowledge of medicine and were certainly not in a position to cure the stone, paralysis, epilepsy, dropsy, anaemia, malignant fevers or other difficult complaints. (Niccolao Manucci, *Storia Do Mogor*, 1656-1712, vol.ii, p. 333.). Commenting on the level of medical education in India, Fryer suggests that the field of medical science in India was 'open to all Pretenders, here being no Bars of Authority, or formal Graduation, Examination or Proof of their Proficiency; but every one ventures, and every one suffers; and those that are most skilled, have it by Tradition, or former Experience descending in their Families.' (John Fryer, *A New Account of Fast India and Persia in Eight Letters being Nine Years Travels Begun 1672 and Finished 1681*, Delhi, 1985, p. 114). Fryer further observed that the Indian physicians neither understood the

fact that by the seventeenth century European physicians and surgeons had established a reputation in Mughal India and were much sought after by the Mughal elites, including the kings. The Mughal rulers even allowed them to treat the female members of the royal household. Hawkins, e.g. treated Jahangir's daughter.<sup>28</sup> In 1658, when Aurangzeb came to the throne, Francois Bernier was appointed court physician.<sup>29</sup>

Even so, the Mughal intellectual class did interact with the Europeans in exchanging ideas about science. One cannot be sure of the extent of dissemination of European scientific ideas in Mughal society, but they did engage with them to better comprehend the western scientific thought. Bernier gave lessons on anatomy and on circulation of blood propounded by William Harvey (1578-1657) to his patron in India, Danishmand Khan. Bernier even dissected sheep to explain to his host the concept of circulation, but failed to impress him. Danishmand Khan retained the Galenic and Avicennian views of the Indian *hakims*. While evidence of such intellectual engagement is scarce, the case of Danishmand Khan strongly suggests the barriers to the reception of European science were still surmountable.

Even as a certain degree of reluctance in the acceptance of European science is fairly evident, there was still a continuous reception of European science in the Mughal society. Father Busi, (who often held academic discussions with Dara, Aurangzeb's

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pulse nor did they treat other ailments. (*ibid.*, pp. 114-15). Careri goes still further when he says, 'In Physick they have but small skill, and cure several diseases by Fasting', (Careri, *Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*, edited by Surendranath Sen, New Delhi, 1949, p. 247) and Manucci is much harsher when he exclaims, 'From such doctors and such drugs *libera nos Domine*' (Niccolao Manucci, *Storia Do Mogor*, Vol. iii, Pt. iii, Calcutta, 1966, p. 214.

<sup>28</sup> Jauhar Aftabchi, *Tazkira-ul-Waqiat*, pp.168.

<sup>29</sup> Ali, M. Athar *The Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb*, p.167,179.

brother) reportedly taught Mathematics to a 'prince of Blood who was superintendent of the nobility.'<sup>30</sup> The discussion between Amanat Khan, the Governor of Surat (1690), and Manucci, the Italian traveller, on alchemy being practiced by the former is another instance of the same type.<sup>31</sup> In 1658, when Aurangzeb came to the throne, Francois Bernier was appointed court physician (and his Indian host Mulla Shafi Yazdi alias Danishmand Khan was exempted from personal appearance at Aurangzeb's court. This was done in order to enable an uninterrupted translation of the European texts in Bernier's possession and exchanges of ideas between the two). Bernier held discussions with him on philosophical and scientific matters which included astronomy, geography and anatomy. He also explained to Danishmand Khan the essence of the Cartesian worldview that had captured the imagination of the seventeenth century European philosophers. With skepticism as its guiding principle, European science would not have gone down well with the ulema and the orthodox classes. Bernier translated the works of European philosophers, Gassendi and Descartes, into Persian for his patron and discussed with him the discoveries of Harvey and Pecquet on anatomy and physiology.<sup>32</sup>

Despite these creative, if still limited engagements, the intellectual base of knowledge still remained the Graeco-Arab learning. The Graeco-Arab learning came to be venerated by the Mughal scholars, and there was, despite European contacts, no effort to transcend it.

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<sup>30</sup> E. Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, p.116.

<sup>31</sup> Niccolao Manucci, *Storia Do Mogor, 1656-1712*, vol.iv, pp. 157-8.

<sup>32</sup> F.Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire, 1656-68*, pp.324-5,339,352-3.

The fascination with Greek and Latin languages was retained down to the eighteenth century. When a noble of Aurangzeb, Mutamad Khan Rustam bin Diyanat Khan Qubad Harisi Badakhshi, a Diwan in Deccan, visited Europe (*Firangistan*) perhaps towards the end of the seventeenth century, he only laboured to acquaint himself with Greek and Latin sciences (*'ulum latini u Yunani*) during his long visit.<sup>33</sup>

To conclude, the ruling elites retained the Arabic-Hellenistic thought, and European scientific thought could never pose a challenge to that thought. Indeed in Akbar's reign, Mutazalite philosophy gained some prominence in the elite circles, but it was successfully challenged by alternative philosophies, like those of the Ishraqi and pantheistic philosophers. Besides, the Aristotelian philosophy, which had been discarded by the Europeans, was held on by the so-called 'rationalists' to the point that it stifled free and critical enquiry. The Mughal intellectual did engage and interact with European scientific thought, but under the suffocating clutches of Graeco-Arab learning, failed to make that interaction a productive one.

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<sup>33</sup> *Khulasat ul-Afkar*, f. 347a. cf. Gulfishan Khan, *Indian Muslim Perception of the West during the Eighteenth Century*, p.40,66n.



## Mughal Response to European Technology and Nature of Response

In the Islamic empires of the East, European 'rarities' or 'curiosities' were collected and gifted by the elite. Humayun wrote about an embassy sent by 'the sovereign of Rum, Soleyman the Magnificent to Persia and exchange of 'various valuable and curious articles: such as, instruments and vessels inlaid with the gold and precious stones, daggers, scimitars, cloths of different kinds, and rarities from the several countries of Europe.'<sup>1</sup> In Kabul, the (interim) capital of the empire (in that year), the palace and its gardens were elaborately decorated during the great Mystic Feast celebrated soon after Humayun's accession in 1530. Turkish and European cloths decorated the walls of rooms that were reportedly "the envy of Chinese picture galleries."<sup>2</sup>

When the direct contact was established between the Portuguese in Goa and the Mughals during the period of Akbar, European wares were demanded by the Mughal elite and European objects of luxury were eagerly bought from Portuguese.<sup>3</sup> In one of the documents presumably belonging to the early seventeenth century, there is a reference to the Mughal court placing an order

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<sup>1</sup> Jouhar Aftabchi, *Private Memoirs of the Mughal Emperor Humayun*, p.123.

<sup>2</sup> Khwandimir, *Qanun-i-Humayuni*, tr. B.Prasad, Calcutta, 1940, pp.64-5.

<sup>3</sup> *Nobility under the great Mughals*, Z.A.Desai (based on *Zakhirat-ul-Khawarin*), Delhi, 2003; in 1616, Francis Fetiplace wrote to EIC, that European velvets were brought here in past by the Portugals; *Letter Received*, vol.iv, p.243.

for horses, canopy and curtains from the Portuguese.<sup>4</sup> The articles imported from Europe were chiefly broadcloth; musical instruments, as trumpets; pictures; curiosities.<sup>5</sup>

Jahangir displayed as much interest in European 'curiosities' as Akbar which he too would acquire from Portuguese in Goa. Muqarrab Khan, a high placed noble under Jahangir, was once sent to Goa for a number of purposes, including the collection of novelties.<sup>6</sup> Jahangir sent yet another officer, Nadir Zaman, for the same purpose.

During his period, the interaction with the English also advanced further. Muqarrab Khan, his noble, was curious about European technology. In 1612, he asked the English factors to provide him a model of a 'Chain-Pump', (which was used in ships to bail out water) which, it seems, was presented to him.<sup>7</sup> Roe also reported that he sent for the Governor of Surat 'six faire knives' which he is said to have accepted gratefully.<sup>8</sup>

When Jahangir gave the title of Shah to Khurram (who was now called Shah Sultan Khurram), he presented him 'a carriage according to English fashion.'<sup>9</sup>

The gifts were received as novelties, and even if they technological expertise the Mughals showed no interest in manufacturing them. Roe also observed that 'the king desireth

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<sup>4</sup> Bibliotheque Nationale, Suppl. Pers. 482, H. 27 (a). I have consulted the microfilm copy of the manuscripts available at the Centre of Advanced Study in History, (Aligarh).

<sup>5</sup> Badauni, Abdul Qadir *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, ed. Ali Ahmad and W.N. Lees, 3 vols, (Calcutta, 1864-9).vol.ii, pp. 290, 338.

<sup>6</sup> *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, pp.215,234.

<sup>7</sup> Caesar de Federici, *Extracts of his.... eighteen years Indian Observations 1563-1581, Purchas His Pilgrims*, 10, Glasgow, 1905, vol.iii, pp. 263-4.

<sup>8</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.46

<sup>9</sup> *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, p.338.

unheard of and rare things but such as either rich or full of cunning, good art and work, which he can as well discern from bad as we ourselves and careth as little for things of mean value.’<sup>10</sup> Factors write that ‘he affects not the value of anything but rarity in everything.’<sup>11</sup> Jahangir’s interest in such gifts did not go beyond mere curiosity and failed to inculcate in him an interest in the technological or scientific principle involved. In 1616, for example, when Roe gave a small silver watch to prince, he said that he would much prefer the pictures that he had shown to the King.<sup>12</sup>

There were some items which were received from the Europeans mainly as gifts. During the seventeenth century, telescopes were used for astronomical observations and as a navigational aid by European seamen. (European pilots engaged by Indians must have been using the telescope for navigational purposes. It was also by them used to ‘spy’ enemy ships.<sup>13</sup> The first clear documented evidence of its knowledge to Mughals comes from the reign of Jahangir when Sir Thomas Roe presented ‘burning glasses and prospectives’ (i.e. telescopes) to the Emperor.<sup>14</sup> Asaf Khan, brother of Nur Jahan, is also reported to have taken interest in telescopes (*durbin*) along with spectacles and other such European devices.<sup>15</sup> In 1652, the English factors asked the Company to send them, among other things, telescopes as

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<sup>10</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) *Early Travels in India 1583-1619*, p.91; *Letter Received*, vi, p.243.

<sup>11</sup> *Letter Received*, vol.i, p.33.

<sup>12</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.227.

<sup>13</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) *The English Factories in India, 1668-9*, p.160.

<sup>14</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.67..

<sup>15</sup> *A Supplementary Calendar of Documents in the India Office Relating to India or to the Home Affairs of the East India Company, 1600-1640*, ed. W. Foster, p.83.

presents for Indians.<sup>16</sup> We are told by the English in 1652 that 'little sale' could be expected of such things.<sup>17</sup> They write that in Agra, among other things, spectacles and burning glasses were unvendible 'by reason of king's absence.'<sup>18</sup> They further commented that 'glass ware such as wine glasses, water glasses, burning glasses, prospective glasses, spectacles etc. was not esteemed.'<sup>19</sup> However, its significance was reduced to being a mere curiosity as we may infer from the fact that in 1666, Tavernier presented a telescope to the ten-year-old son of Sha'ista Khan, the governor of Bengal.<sup>20</sup> It is clear that even by then, its manufacture was not attempted, although the Mughals were presumably not unaware of its utility and significance. Besides, there is no evidence of its use by Indians either in the navigational or astronomical observations during the seventeenth century.<sup>21</sup> Evidently, no productive use was made of telescopes during the high Mughal period. Raja Jai Singh Sawai (1699-1743) of Jaipur, a Hindu vassal of Muhammad Shah (r. 1719-48), (who had built or restored five observatories between about 1721 and 1734, including one in Delhi and one in his own capital in Jaipur)<sup>22</sup> did perhaps use telescopes at the Delhi observatory.<sup>23</sup> But these telescopes were presumably bought from the Jesuits and were in no case of indigenous manufacture.

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<sup>16</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) *The English Factories in India*, 1651-4, p. 85.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Letter Received*, vi, p.201.

<sup>19</sup> *Letter Received*, vol.iv, p.298 (appendix).

<sup>20</sup> Tavernier, Jean Baptiste *Travels in India*, 1640-67, vol.i, p. 130.

<sup>21</sup> Edward Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, pp. 133-4.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Its manufacture involved a combination of concave and convex lenses which was not known to Mughals. Cf. Joseph, Needham *Science and Civilization in China*, 4 vols., (Cambridge, 1954-65), vol. iv. pt iii, pp. 562, 576.

Terrestrial globe was another item which was given as a present to the Mughal Emperors, princes and nobles by the English Factors.<sup>24</sup> Terrestrial globes were used by Europeans aboard ships during the seventeenth century.<sup>25</sup> Globes appear as a symbol in a painting during the reign of Jahangir, showing an outline map of some Asian countries.<sup>26</sup> But it remained just that- a curiosity and a symbol used in allegorical paintings. Apparently, its practical use was largely ignored by the Mughal elite.

Similarly, compasses were neither much used, nor eagerly procured, and obviously, not manufactured. In 1677, the English factors in Bombay complained that, among other things, compasses were not procurable and they requested the Company to send them from England. They thought that, apart from their own use, surplus compasses with them might also be sold (to Indians) with profit.<sup>27</sup> It could be perhaps inferred from, this that Indians did not manufacture compass themselves. We find ourselves similarly situated as regards binnacles,<sup>28</sup> lanterns<sup>29</sup> etc.

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<sup>24</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) *The English Factories in India*, 1618-21, p. 21; 1646-50, p. 338.

<sup>25</sup> *The East India Company Journals of Capt. William Keeling and Master Thomas Bonner, 1615-17*, ed. Michael Strachan and Boies Peurose, OUP, (London and Bombay, 1971), p. 183 and n. 28.

<sup>26</sup> R. Ettinghausen, *Paintings of Sultans and Emperors of India*, Pl. 12: 'Jahangir's Dream of Shah 'Abbas's Visit'. Also see Crowe, Silvia Sheila Haywood, Susan Jellicoe and Gordon Patterson., *The Gardens of Mughal India*, unnumbered plate facing p.90.

<sup>27</sup> F. Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire, 1656-66*, p. 244.

<sup>28</sup> Temple, R.C. (ed.), *The Papers of Thomas Bowrey*, p. 135 and n.1.

<sup>29</sup> In 1668, the English factors on the Coromandel coast required lanterns from England. See Foster, W. (ed.) *The English Factories in India*, 1668-9, P.68; Also see Irfan Habib, 'The Technology and

Sand or hour-glasses were brought by Europeans to India.<sup>30</sup> This time-indicating device came into use in Europe during the second half of the fourteenth century.<sup>31</sup> There is little indication of its use in India before Akbar's time. They were perhaps not much used for time-keeping purpose but seem to have been readily accepted and used for astronomical or astrological purposes. Some Mughal paintings, while depicting a birth scene in harem, show astrologers casting the horoscope with a sand-glass<sup>32</sup> These were used as a symbol in Mughal paintings, particularly during Jahangir's period.<sup>33</sup> Again, Manucci refers to its use in the Mughal army.<sup>34</sup> John Marshall (1668-72) observed: 'In some places, as at Patna, they have glasses with sand in them, made like our houre-glasses in England, which are exact *gurry*.'<sup>35</sup> Indian ghari was of twenty-four minutes duration. In Europe, there were one hour, half-hour, and

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*Economy of Mughal India*', The Devraj Chanana Lectures, Delhi, 1970 (cyclostyled), p. 21.

<sup>30</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) *The English Factories in India*, 1618-21, p. 21; 1646-50, p. 338. For 'half-hour' and 'half-minute' glasses, see *ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>31</sup> Charles Singer and others (ed.), *History of Technology*, Oxford, 1984, vol.iii, p.601.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. the Akbarnama illustration, no. 80/117 (Victoria and Albert Museum): '*Birth of a Prince*'; also, an illustration from Akbarnama (vol. i, BM), f. 34b: '*Birth of Timur*,' Luber Hajek, *Indian Miniatures of the Moghul School*, London, 1960, Pl. 18: 'Astrologer with Hour-glass, etc.'

<sup>33</sup> For a giant hour-glass with symbolic depiction, see R. Ettinghausen, *Paintings of the Sultans and Emperors of India*, Pl. 14: 'Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to Kings' (A.D. 1625).

<sup>34</sup> Manucci, Niccolao *Storia Do Mogor, 1656-1712*, vol. ii, p. 70. Thus Bowrey is not altogether light when he says that the Indians did not use hour-glasses. Cf. R.C. Temple, (ed.) *The Papers of Thomas Bowrey 1669-1713*, p. 19.

<sup>35</sup> John Marshall in *India-Notes and Observation in Bengal*, ed. S.A.Khan, London, 1927, p.281.

even half-a-minute glasses in Europe,<sup>36</sup> but not those of twenty-four minutes, which shows that these sand-glasses were manufactured here.<sup>37</sup>

There is, however, some evidence to suggest that European technology in ship-building was borrowed by the Mughals. Muqarrab Khan, in-charge of the ports of Surat and Cambay during Jahangir's reign, who asked the English to provide him with a model of a "chain-pump", which may have been supplied to him.<sup>38</sup> That European ships were emulated is evident from the fact that as early as 1612, the ships at Dabul are reported to have been made 'Christian like, with topps and all their tacklinge accordinglie.'<sup>39</sup> It was remarked by the end of the first half of the seventeenth century that Indians had become so expert as to convert an Indian-built ship outwardly 'after the Christian manner' by fitting her properly.<sup>40</sup> During the 1670-3, Bowrey, Fryer and Ovington praise the Indian ship carpenters.<sup>41</sup> From about the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Indian ship-builders at Surat also began to copy closely the Dutch and English designs of ships, and the results were eminently successful.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, neither any European machine, nor apparatus is known to have been used in that industry. Apparently

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<sup>36</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) *The English Factories in India*, (hereafter *EFI*) 1646-50, p. 106)

<sup>37</sup> S. Eleanor Godfrey, *The Development of English Glass-making, 1650-1690*, University of North Carolina Press, 1975, p. 232.

<sup>38</sup> A. J. Qaisar. 'Merchant Shipping in India during the Seventeenth Century,' *Medieval India-A Miscellany*, vol.2, p. 198 n.

<sup>39</sup> Jourdain, John *The Journal of John Jourdain, 1608-17*, ed. W. Foster, p. 198.

<sup>40</sup> *EFI*, 1642-5, p.168.

<sup>41</sup> Temple, R.C. (ed.) *The Papers of Thomas Bowrey 1669-1713*, p.102; John Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia being Nine Years' Travels, 1672-81*, ed. W. Crooke, 3 vols., Hakluyt Society, London, 1909-1915, vol.i, p.267.

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.*, p. 267.

the carpenters and others went on working with their existing tools. The imitation of the European ships did not lead to any technological development. The European ships were fitted with pumps to bail out water.<sup>43</sup> They used piston-pumps before the opening of the sixteenth century, but shifted to (iron) chain-pumps.<sup>44</sup> The reason for the shift to chain-pumps was that it 'takes up twice as much water as the ordinary did'<sup>45</sup> European account hints at the use of buckets by which the passengers cleared water manually.<sup>46</sup>

These pumps did arouse the curiosity of Indian ship-wrights and indeed the Indians ships had started using chain-pumps from around the middle of the seventeenth century. In 1656, Tavernier testifies their presence in a large vessel belonging to the King of Golkonda, in which he travelled from Masulipatam to Gombroon (Bandar Abbas], piloted by six Dutch seamen and assisted by one hundred Indian sailors.<sup>47</sup>

In 1647, more than a century after the Europeans came to India, a ship of 'European build bought for Prince Dara Shukoh was later rejected 'for being major part caulked and not rabited, which building is only known to these people.'<sup>48</sup> Contemporary observers however, do not speak of any technical superiority of caulking over the Indian method of performing the same task.

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<sup>43</sup> *Purchas His Pilgrims*, vol. iii, pp. 264, 297-8; *ibid.*, vol.v, pp. 2-3, 9; Tavernier, Jean Baptiste *Travels in India, 1640-67*, vol.i, p. 255; *The Life of Icelander Jon Olafsson*, tr. D.B. Phillpotts, Hakluyt Society, 2<sup>nd</sup> Series, (London, 1931), vol. ii, pp. 212-13.

<sup>44</sup> Joseph, Needham *Science and Civilization in China*, iv, pt iii, pp. 666, 667.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*, p. 667, n. (a).

<sup>46</sup> Qaisar, A. J. 'Merchant Shipping in India during the Seventeenth Century', p. 197, n. 5.

<sup>47</sup> Tavernier, Jean Baptiste *Travels in India, 1640-67*, p.255.

<sup>48</sup> *EFI*, 1646-50, pp.90-91.



That no active interest was taken by Mughal elite in technological development is evident from the fact that there was no attempt to manufacture the pumps and its technology was not copied and the pumps continued to be either borrowed or purchased from Europeans.

Several European goods did indeed have a good demand among the Mughal aristocracy. During the sixteenth century, it appears that a variety of glass objects were imported largely from Europe by the Portuguese,<sup>49</sup> but it is during the seventeenth century that one meets with considerable documentation of European glassware imported into India which included looking-glasses, window-panes, spectacles, telescopes, burning and 'multiplying' glasses, sand or hourglasses, etc. as there was some demand generated by the Mughal elite. Muqarrab Khan had even wanted to 'experience the use of window panes, a wish which unfortunately could not be fulfilled by the English factors due to the non-availability of a glacier.'<sup>50</sup> In 1616, Joseph Salbank wrote to EIC from Agra that Looking glasses could only be given away as a present.<sup>51</sup> In Dec.1617, Francis Fetiplace and Robert Hughes to EIC that English looking glasses are (heavy and bad and therefore) unvendible.<sup>52</sup> In any case, they write that glass ware such as wine glasses, water glasses, burning glasses, prospective glasses,

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<sup>49</sup> P.K.Gode, 'History of Glass etc.', p. 87; cf. A.J. Qaiser, *Indian Response to European Technology and Culture* p.71. In Europe in the early sixteenth century, tin-foil metallic mirrors were replaced with the looking-glasses of Venice (an extension of the knowledge of making sheet and plate glass) which pushed aside metallic mirrors.( Cf. Honey, W.B. *Glass-A Handbook and Guide to the Museum Collection* (Victoria and Albert Museum), (London, 1946), p. 7.

<sup>50</sup> *EFI*, 1618-21, p.11.

<sup>51</sup> *Letter Received*, vi, p.232.

<sup>52</sup> *Letter Received*, vi, p.244.

spectacles etc. was not esteemed.<sup>53</sup> President Breton and co. at Swally Marine wrote to the company to send as gift to Dara, a cabinet and looking glasses.<sup>54</sup> In the later stages Indian workmen had also adopted European skill in making looking-glasses, spectacles and window-panes of different colours,<sup>55</sup> but we certainly do not find any reference of its manufacture during Mughal period.

In India, metallic mirrors were used and hence European looking-glasses were acquired as a novelty by the Indian elite either through purchase or gift from Europeans. As early as 1608, William Finch saw a few large Venetian mirrors placed one above the other on the walls of Emperor Jahangir's court at Lahore,<sup>56</sup> which may have been acquired from the Portuguese at Goa. The nobles also showed interest in acquiring looking glasses. Asaf Khan, for example, is reported to have bought looking-glasses from an Italian in 1615 who had gone to Jahangir's court at Ajmer with looking-glasses where 'he sold some wares to Asaf Khan, a great Mughal noble.'<sup>57</sup> In 1615, Roe writes that no one will accept spoiled things, as your gilded looking glasses, unglued, unfoyled, and fallen peeices (and here no man taught how to mend them).<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, iv, p.298 (appendix).

<sup>54</sup> *EFI*, 1642-5, p.160.

<sup>55</sup> For the description of glass-manufacturing in India during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries see F. Buchanan, *A Journey from Madras through the countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar*, London, 1807, vol.ii, pp. 20-21; Honey, W.B. *Glass-A Handbook and Guide to the Museum Collection*, pp. 354-56.

<sup>56</sup> The account of William Finch in Foster, W. (ed.) *Early Travels in India 1583-1619*, p. 164.

<sup>57</sup> *Letter Received*, vol. ii, p. 143; Foster, W. *A Supplementary Calendar of Documents in the India Office relating to India or to the Home Affairs of the East India Company, 1600-1640*, p. 83.

<sup>58</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.76.

In 1609, Laus Deo in Surat wrote that, 'I suppose that some faire large looking glass would be highly accepted of this king, for he affects not the value of anything but rarity in everything.'<sup>59</sup> They write about Agra that it was a mean place- where comb cases, spectacles and burning glasses and cony skins were unvendible by reason of king's absence.<sup>60</sup> In any case, they write that glass ware such as wine glasses, water glasses, burning glasses, prospective glasses, spectacles etc. was not esteemed.<sup>61</sup> Looking glasses, pictures, comb-cases and spectacles are not mercantile wares but were purchased only to give away as presents.<sup>62</sup> In 1621, Muqarrab Khan purchased a large Venetian mirror ( these were very costly during this period, ranging from 300 to 1,250 rupees) at a very high price, that is, 300 rupees.<sup>63</sup> However, no attempt seems to have been made to learn the manufacture of looking glass. There is a reference of a certain Robert Young, who was sent to Surat by Company in 1614 in order to instruct four or five English factors in this art,<sup>64</sup> but there is no reference of this man or any other person skilled in the art of making looking glasses ever visiting the Mughal court.

In 1683, another looking glass was given to Mir Bahr<sup>65</sup> at Patna (which costed two rupees).<sup>66</sup> Yet another was given to one of

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<sup>59</sup> *Letter Received*, p.i,p.33.

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*, vi, p.201.

<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*,iv, p.298 (appendix).

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.* p.232.

<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*, p.246.

<sup>64</sup> Foster, W. *A Supplementary Calendar of Documents in the India Office relating to India or to the Home Affairs of the East India Company, 1600-1640*, p. 41.

<sup>65</sup> Mir Bahr was the Lord of Admiralty. His duties were to maintain a fleet for fighting, and to police the principal inland waterways. He also looked after and regulated the sea and river ports and collected tolls from the merchants.

the subordinates of the Nawab's diwan (whose cost was three rupees).<sup>67</sup> One was given to the *amil* of the Patna mint's darogha, which was valued at four rupees.<sup>68</sup> It can be reasonably said that despite the increasing demand and use of the European looking-glass by the Mughal elite, there is no indication of its manufacture either with or without the instigation of the elite. Besides, it is equally curious that despite increasing use of looking glasses by Mughal elite, there is not a single pictorial depiction of it in Mughal paintings during the seventeenth century, and it is only in the paintings of the following century that we find the depiction of European rectangular looking-glasses.<sup>69</sup>

Spectacles were invented in Europe in the thirteenth century, first with convex lenses, and then with concave lenses in the sixteenth century.<sup>70</sup> The earliest reference to the use of spectacles in India is in context of a Vijaynagar minister, when in c. 1520, Vyasaraya is described as reading a book with the help of spectacles (convex eye glasses). These were perhaps gifted by the

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<sup>66</sup> Foster, W. *A Supplementary Calendar of Documents*, 3 Sept. 1683.

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, 24 Sept. 1683.

<sup>68</sup> cf. Patna Diary, G/28/i, 27 Aug. 1683. cf. A.J. Qaiser, *Indian Response to European Technology and Culture*, p.74.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Hajek, *Miniatures from the East*, Pl. 23: 'Bilawal ragini' (Rajasthan, 1750); R. Reiff, *Indian Miniatures*, Pl. 4: 'Toilette of Radha' (Kangra, 1800); *Diwan-i Hafiz* (BM Add. 7763), f. 16b (Kashmir, eighteenth century); *Artibus Asiae*, Supplementum xxxii, fig. 94: 'Ram Singh II of Kola Watching a Bather' (Kota, c. 1828). A miniature from Rajasthan (Reiff, Pl. 3: 'Bilawal ragini') showing the rectangular looking-glass has been dated as 'second half of the seventeenth century'. The dating seems to be doubtful: perhaps it should belong to the early eighteenth century. cf. A.J. Qaiser, *Indian Response to European Technology and Culture*, p.74.

<sup>70</sup> A.C.Crombie, *Medieval and Early Modern Science*, vol.i, pp.231-32; Joseph, Needham *Science and Civilization*, vol.iv (I), pp.118-21.

Portuguese.<sup>71</sup> During the Mughal period, we see spectacles appear in miniatures of Akbar's time.<sup>72</sup> Rudolfus, a member of the first Jesuit mission at Akbar's court in 1580, is said to have used spectacles.<sup>73</sup> Initially, there was less demand for spectacles. In 1616, the English factors at Surat sent a large stock of glassware, including spectacles, for sale at the Mughal court in Ajmer.<sup>74</sup> but they write that 'spectacles was not esteemed.'<sup>75</sup> However, they continued to procure spectacles from the European merchants. President Kerridge at Surat to John Bangham at the Mughal court, 8 September 1625, wrote: 'Mr. Young has stated that Asaf Khan (Nur Jahan's brother) desires some English spectacles; so a box containing two pairs is forwarded for him.'<sup>76</sup> Later, however, the demand for spectacles somewhat grew among the elite. By mid-sixteenth-century, spectacles had become common enough to be used by Mughal painters. We get a portrait of Mir Musavvir (1565-70) shown using spectacles, signed by Mir Saiyid Ali (now in Collection-Musee Guimet, Paris). That they were quite common by the close of the sixteenth century is evident from the fact that contemporary intellectuals were exchanging letters and verses that referred to the '*ainak*' in rather familiar terms. The next reference to spectacles is found in Jamaluddin Inju's *Farhang-i-Jahangiri* (1608-09), wherein 'the chashmak is a word that is said to have

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<sup>71</sup> *Vyasayogi-Charita* of Somnath Kavi, ed. B. Venkoba Rao, Bangalore, 1926, p. xx. P.K. Gode, 'Some Notes on the Invention of Spectacles', in his *Studies in Indian Cultural History*, Vol. iii, Pt. 2, pp. 106-07.

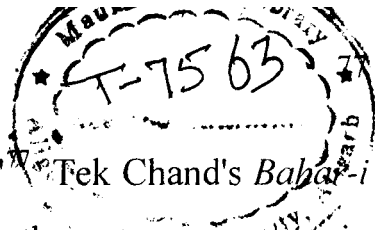
<sup>72</sup> S.P. Verma, *Art and Material Culture as represented in the Paintings of Akbar's Court*, Delhi, 1978, p.113.

<sup>73</sup> Monserrate, Fr. A. *Commentary on his Journey to the Court of Akbar*, p. 193.

<sup>74</sup> Foster, W. *A Supplementary Calendar*, p. 83.

<sup>75</sup> *Letters Received*, iv, p.298 (appendix).

<sup>76</sup> W. Foster (ed.), *EFI*, 1624-29, p. 93.



three meanings; the first being the "*ainak*," Tek Chand's *Bahar-i 'Ajam*, a dictionary completed in 1739, lists the numerous verses in which the word *chashma* and *chashmak* occur.<sup>78</sup> Careri, who saw Aurangzeb in 1695 at a very old age, wrote with admiration that the Emperor could endorse petitions "with his own hands without spectacles."<sup>79</sup>

However, the Mughal elite did not show any interest in adopting the European technology for manufacturing spectacles. There is evidence of some spectacles being referred to as being of European (*firangi*) make<sup>80</sup> which probably indicates their manufacture by Indians also at this time, though on a modest scale. But it cannot be determined whether Indians had learnt the fabrication of glass for making lenses, or they worked upon glasses imported from Europe. Although the evidence for the manufacture of spectacles with glass lenses on the eve of the eighteenth century is not very strong, there are indications of positive response from the letters discussed above: after all, the manufacture of crystal lenses was not alien to Indians. In fact one may perhaps also argue that these Indian spectacles were made of crystal lenses. The failure to match Europeans glass industry by the seventeenth century had become so visible that Prince Muazzam in the reign of Aurangzeb (1659-1707) could not believe that the glass vessels

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<sup>77</sup> *Farhang-i-Jahangiri*, A.D. 1608-9, Jamaluddin Husain Inju, (Lucknow, 1876).  
vol. i, p. 479.

<sup>78</sup> Tek Chand, *Bahar-i 'Ajam*, Nawal Kishore, 1916, vol. i, p. 315, and vol. ii, pp. 235, 466.

<sup>79</sup> Thevenot, Jean de *The Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*, p. 221.

<sup>80</sup> Abdu'l Jalil Husaini Wasiti Bilgrami, Letters to [his son,] Mir Sayyid Muhammad Bilgrami [1706-20], ed. and transl. anonymous, in *Oriental Miscellany*, Vol.i, pp. 138,204-06. cf. A.J. Qaiser, *Indian Response to European Technology and Culture*, p.75-6.

from Europe were of transparent glass and not made of crystal.<sup>81</sup> It also shows that spectacles were not made of glass. It is difficult to be sure that they were manufactured in India and not imported, for spectacles were often brought as presents from Europe for Indian notables.<sup>82</sup> Perhaps those made of crystal could have been of indigenous manufacture.<sup>83</sup> Spectacles figured prominently in almost all the gifts of rarities to the emperor's courtiers and eunuchs on festivals even in the second decade of the eighteenth century.<sup>84</sup>

Another item which was brought to the Mughal court by Europeans was the mechanical clock. It is not clear as to whether it were the Portuguese or the English who introduced it to the Mughal court. Perhaps the Portuguese brought the European mechanical clock to South India during the sixteenth century,<sup>85</sup> We may fairly infer that such clocks were used by the Portuguese in their Indian settlements)but there is no reference of a clock in Akbar's period. The only definite evidence that we get of the clock is in Jahangir's period. The initial response, however, had been disheartening and in 1613, the English company 'resolved' not to send any clocks. Nevertheless, in 1614, Sir Robert Shirley amongst divers toys presented him with 'a standing striking clock of silver which had in it other petty inventions, it is worth some 100 /', which was greatly esteemed by him.<sup>86</sup> That Jahangir took it as a

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<sup>81</sup> Nicolao Manucci, *Storia Do Mogor*, vol.ii, p.401..

<sup>82</sup> *EFI*, 1624-29, p.93.

<sup>83</sup> For such spectacles, see *Bahar-i-Ajam*, s.v. *ainak*.

<sup>84</sup> Wilson, C.R. (ed.), *Early Annals of English Bengal*, vol.ii, pt.2, pp. 78-84.

<sup>85</sup> George Sarton, *Introduction to the History of Science*, London, 1947, vol. iii, pt ii, p. 45-46.

<sup>86</sup> Otto Kurz says that the first watches to reach the Mughal court came from Persia when in 1616 Shah 'Abbas sent these clocks, which is wrong as he received clocks even before also. Kurz, Otto

mere novelty is evident from his remark that 'king demanded such things of me for his women to wear in hunting, white or some light colour, for his hunting journeys would be esteemed.'<sup>87</sup> In fact in 1615, the English factors asked for a clock fitted with some rare devices 'to strike after the Moors' fashion,'<sup>88</sup> but it doesn't seem to have worked out.<sup>89</sup> Then, Sir Thomas Roe gave a clock along with two other 'trifles' to him.<sup>90</sup> Jahangir's disinterest in this new device can be judged from the fact that his memoirs do not allude to gifts of clocks and watches either from Europe or Persia.

Even when one Richard Steel, an English adventurer, came to his court with a painter (Hatfield) and a clockmaker with a view to acquiring patronage from the Emperor, and thus 'to earn some

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*European Clocks and Watches in the Near East*, (London, 1975) p.64.

<sup>87</sup> *Letters Received*, vol.ii, Sept.1614, p.108.

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*, vol. iii, p. 88.

<sup>89</sup> Firstly, 'because they are quicklie out of frame and none can mend them but clockmakers', secondly, because of the risk of their being damaged during the voyage; and lastly, because it was uncertain how the people in India 'doe accompt their daies.' This perhaps alludes to the different time-measurement system in India from that of Europe. While the Indian system had 60 'hours' of 24 minutes to the full day, the European consisted of 24 hours of 60 minutes. Obviously, European clock would not have served any purpose for Indians unless they adopted the European system of 12 equal double-hours, and modify it to bring the clock in line with the Indian way of measuring time, just like the Chinese did Cf. Sarton, George *Introduction to the History of Science*, p. 1547. (See *Baburnama*, tr. A.S. Beveridge, vol.ii, pp. 516-17; Fazl, Abul *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol.iii. p. 6; Terry, Edward *A Voyage to East India, &c.*, 1616-19, p. 317; John Marshall in *India-Notes and Observation in Bengal*, p. 281; Thevenot, Jean de *The Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*, pp. 139-40. Also see F. E. Pargiter, 'The Telling of Time in Ancient India', JRAS, 1915, pp. 690-715; Cf. Joseph, Needham *Science and Civilization*, vol. v, pt ii, p. 439 and n. (c) p. 440 n. (a), p. 461).

<sup>90</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe*, p. 115 n.



profits', he failed in getting Jahangir interested in clockmaking.<sup>91</sup> The English factors at Balasore asked the Company in 1650 to send four or five good 'substantial house-clocks' to be given as presents to the governors and princes.<sup>92</sup> In 1666, Tavernier gave a 'watch having a case of enamelled gold' to the 10-year-old son of Sha'ista Khan.<sup>93</sup> He also presented costly watches to a high Mughal official, and to a eunuch of Princess Jahan Ara Begum.<sup>94</sup> But there was a similar show of disinterest on their part too. In fact, clocks continued to be procured only as gifts and there is no evidence of the purchase of European clocks by Indians during the seventeenth century.<sup>95</sup> Tavernier gave two watches as presents to a Mughal noble and a eunuch of Princess Jahan Ara costing 480 and 174 rupees respectively.

It is clear that manufacture of clocks could not have, in any case, been attempted because the two most essential features of an ordinary mechanical clock, that is, the weight-drive and scapesiest were not known in Mughal India.<sup>96</sup> There is no evidence that the metal was employed in the gear-wheels, (in pre-modern India, two forms of gearing were known; worm-gearing and pin-drum) and, unless this was done, there could hardly be any employment of

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<sup>91</sup> W. Noel Sainsbury (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers, 1617-21*, p. 120. Also see Kurz, Otto *European Clocks and Watches in the Near East*, p. 64.

<sup>92</sup> *EFI*, 1646-50, p. 338.

<sup>93</sup> Tavernier, Jean Baptiste *Travels in India, 1640-67*, vol.i, p. 130.

<sup>94</sup> *ibid.*, p. 140.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. I.O. Surat G/36/5, f. 42 for the 'chests of clocks'; G/36/94, f. 21 a (these two references relate to a.d. 1697 and 1694). Also see I.O. Surat G/36/9, 27 Feb. 1717. cf. A.J. Qaiser, *Indian Response to European Technology and Culture*, p.69.

<sup>96</sup> Joseph, Needham *Science and Civilization*, vol. iv, pt ii, p. 441 and n. (c).

sophisticated gearing.<sup>97</sup> The question of manufacturing clocks could thus not arise. Forms of gearing after European examples were thus not adopted in India till well into the 18th century.

In the armament sector, the earliest source of European influence during the sixteenth century was the Portuguese. It is fair to say that while the Portuguese could not have succeeded without important qualitative military advantages, they were still using older technology than had been provided during the Artillery revolution. For example, by the 1440s and 50s ordnance of cast bronze was edging out wrought iron as the premier European ordnance. The French ordnance was superior for many reasons: the guns were cast of high quality bronze and were therefore light for the weight of ball they fired;<sup>98</sup> whereas the Portuguese ordnance was probably mostly of wrought iron. Then, between 1465 and 1477 the gun design in Europe had improved dramatically. It was discovered, that a small iron cannon ball could do more damage than the large stone balls (which fractured on impact) could. It was thus possible to make new guns which were much smaller (6-8 feet (1,8-2,4 m) long), but more powerful than the old bombards. The small size allowed the guns to be mounted on wheels, and thus be mobile. But from what we know of later developments, the largest Portuguese naval guns must have thrown stone balls of some thirty to forty pounds. Nevertheless, the Portuguese ordnance was far more powerful and more effective than that of the Arab and Indian vessels. Cannons in which gun-powder was used to propel balls of metal or stone had appeared in Europe and China almost

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<sup>97</sup> J. Ovington, *A Voyage to Surat in the Year 1689*, ed. H.G. Rawlinson, London, 1929, pp.166-67.

<sup>98</sup> Duffy, Christopher *Siege Warfare: the Fortress in the Early Modern World 1494-1660*, (London, 1979), p. 8-9

simultaneously about the middle of the fourteenth century.<sup>99</sup> The Zamorins of Calicut did have some cannonry, but it was certainly inferior, and those who manned them were adept neither at aiming nor reloading, which suggests that fire arms were not very common there. In 1503, some iron guns were used by his men which could project stones 'as hard as a man could throw them.'<sup>100</sup> Therefore, some efforts were made to acquire European technology in warfare. Varthema has preserved an account of the two Milanese who were weaned away from the Portuguese to manufacture ordnance for the Zamorin.<sup>101</sup>

Handgun was another gift of Artillery Revolution and was developed in 1420s and 1430s. ('Harquebus' or arquebus, was a small portable handgun fitted with a matchlock,<sup>102</sup> The handguns were introduced by Babur in the beginning of the sixteenth century in the form of Turkish matchlocks. (The response of the local troops garrisoning the fort of Bajaur to the use of *tufang* by Babur's men in 1519 indicates that they were not at all familiar with this new weapon.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> I.A. Khan, *Gunpowder and Firearms-Warfare in Medieval India*, Oxford, 2004, p.3.

<sup>100</sup> Whiteway, R.S. *The Rise of the Portuguese Power in India, 1497-1550*, (London, 1899), p. 37).

<sup>101</sup> *Travels of Ludovico di Varthema, 1503-1508*, tr. J.W. Jones and G.P. Badger, London, 1863, p. 262.)

<sup>102</sup> Montgomery, Bernard Law *A History of Warfare*, (London, 1968), p. 216.

<sup>103</sup> *Baburnama*, tr. by A.S. Beveridge, reprint, London, 1969, p.368). Early handguns of the Ottoman Empire were also called *tufang/tufak* and *banduq*. (I.A. Khan, *Gunpowder and Firearms-Warfare in Medieval India*, p.115) Jos Gommans finds the discussion about the introduction of gunpowder in India, complicated by the ever changing nomenclature of the weaponry involved. The distinction between so-called 'co-viative' throwers of projectiles and true guns-i.e. where a bullet or a cannon ball fills the bore of the barrel in order to use the maximum propellant force

The Indian *bunduq* ('bonducos') has been identified with arquebuses and similar handguns. Curiously, Abul Fazl compares Mughal technology with Turkey, and not with Europe.<sup>104</sup> Abul Fazl mentions the manufacture of matchlocks, guns and cannons,<sup>105</sup> and bullets etc.<sup>106</sup>, but he mentions only Indian gun-makers under Akbar.<sup>107</sup> Handguns were depicted in Mughal paintings also.<sup>108</sup>

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of the gunpowder charge-is not always evident from the terminology used in primary sources. This, according to him, is aggravated by the fact that we have only very few Indian sources that are more or less contemporary with the introduction of either gunpowder or guns, and none of these sources refers directly to such an event. Even worse, later sources that describe earlier events, tend to use technical words like *tup* (cannon) and *tufang* (small arms) anachronistically, giving the false impression of an early appearance of these weapons, due to which, he criticizes I.A.Khan, of constructing a tentative argument on the highly circumstantial evidence, that true guns were introduced during the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, which would be roughly about a half to one century later than the Mameluks and the Ottomans in the Middle East and more or less simultaneous with Iran. For I.A.Khan, the essential reference is found in the word *Kaman-i-rad* (lit. thunder-bow) as used in Persian texts from 15<sup>th</sup> century Central and South Asia. In his view, these references demonstrate that the Timurids and Bahmanis employed heavy mortars on one occasion capable of throwing a stone projectile of about 12,000 kg.! cf. *Jos Gommans, Mughal Warfare: Indian Frontiers and Highroads to Empire 1500-1700*, London, 2002, p.146.

<sup>104</sup> He writes that with the exception of Turkey, probably no other country was equal to the Mughals in this. Fazl, Abul *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. i, p. 120.

<sup>105</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> *ibid.*, vol. iii, p.121.

<sup>107</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> 'Nur Jahan with a rifle', by Abul Hasan, Mughal, probably dated 1612-13-shows her with a long rifle larger than her own size, which must have needed a support to rest and fire, Beach, M.C. *Mughal and Rajput Painting*, CUP, Cambridge, p.96). Portrait of 'Shahjahan', by Payag, Mughal, ca. 1630, shows Shahjahan with a hand-gun (and a halo) which is equal his size (*ibid.*, p.145). Another painting shows Shahjahan shooting a Nilgae with a hand-gun (*ibid.*, p.152).

However, during Akbar's period, the latest western advances in firearms would become known in the Mughal empire within a few decades of their first appearance, though the degree of their acceptance varied. The increasing sophistication of the handguns in the West, from simple arquebus of the early period, to the matchlocks, wheel-locks and flint-locks of the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries meant a manifold increase in the weapon's effectiveness.<sup>109</sup> After the matchlock, whose quality was praised by Abul Fazl,<sup>110</sup> the wheel-lock which first appeared in Europe in the twenties of the sixteenth century was in all probability a familiar firearm in Akbar's personal arsenal by the time Abul Fazl set about collecting information for the *A'in-i Akbari* (1589). Abul Fazl crediting Akbar with the introduction of a new type of musket in which 'the fire is kindled without *fatila* [only] with slight movement of masha most probably indicates a wheel-lock.<sup>111</sup> Latham suggested that it was not a wheel-lock, and perhaps the Mughal arsenal produced what was called a snaphaunce lock—the precursor of the flint-lock on the one hand, and on the other one step ahead of the snapping matchlock. Abul Fazl is silent on the alternative mechanism employed.<sup>112</sup> Latham even says that there is no evidence to establish the introduction of European handguns mounted with wheel-locks into India,<sup>113</sup> though there is also an explicit

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<sup>109</sup> I.A. Khan, *Gunpowder and Firearms-Warfare in Medieval India*, p.5.

<sup>110</sup> 'Matchlocks are now strong that they do not burst,' Fazl, Abul *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. iii, p.121.

<sup>111</sup> *ibid.*, 'Wheel-lock was a very delicate and expensive mechanism seldom used for arquebuses and muskets: it was generally used for pistols in Europe. (Cf. Montgomery, Bernard Law *A History of Warfare*, pp. 231-2; also see Daumas, Maurice (ed.) *A History of Technology and Invention*, p. 491.

<sup>112</sup> Fazl, Abul *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol.iii,p.121.

<sup>113</sup> R. Wilkinson Latham, *Antique Guns in Colour*, pp. 34-5.

description of a wheel-lock musket penned by an anonymous author in 1630.<sup>114</sup> At any rate, even if Abul Fazl's claim is true, such guns were not manufactured on a large scale, and were probably meant for Akbar's personal use.<sup>115</sup> Abul Fazl also described a gun, (which could easily be carried by a single elephant; and was) named *Gajnal*. Guns which a single man could carry were called *Narnals*. The *narnal* (used mainly by infantry) was the most popular hand-gun.<sup>116</sup> It was a matchlock named by Akbar,<sup>117</sup> and in all probability, *Gajnal* too was a matchlock. In the seventeenth century, *narnal* was developed into a *shaturnal*, which could be handled by a single man.<sup>118</sup>

In the seventeenth century, we notice a further slackness of response towards European arms technology than had already set in. The arquebuses used by Indians were criticized by European observers.<sup>119</sup> In 1630s, Indian soldiers ('*sipahis*') were observed carrying arquebuses which 'being poorly made, and as it were, awkward arms,'<sup>120</sup> coupled with the inefficiency of soldiers which rendered the arquebuses even more ineffective.<sup>121</sup> That the wheel-lock (Europe knew the wheel-lock (with pyrites) which began to be used by the 1520s)<sup>122</sup> had not replaced the matchlock is evident

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<sup>114</sup> I.A. Khan, 'The Nature of Handguns in Mughal India: 16th and 17th Centuries', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 52nd session, New Delhi, 1992, p.283.

<sup>115</sup> Qaiser, A J. *Indian Response to European Technology and Culture*, p.53.

<sup>116</sup> For *narnal* see Abul Fazl, *A'in-i Akbari*, vol.i, p.82.

<sup>117</sup> *ibid.*, vol.i, pp. 119-123.

<sup>118</sup> I.A. Khan, *Gunpowder and Firearms-Warfare in Medieval India*, p.94.

<sup>119</sup> *EFI*, 1621-3, P. 72.

<sup>120</sup> Manrique, Sebastian *Travels, 1629-43*, vol.ii, pp. 125, 227.

<sup>121</sup> *ibid.*, p. 234.

<sup>122</sup> Maurice Daumas (ed.), *A History of Technology and Invention*, vol.ii, pp. 488-9.

from the description of a wheel-lock musket by an anonymous author in 1630 which goes to suggest that it was perceived in the Mughal empire down to the beginning of Shahjahan's reign as a very rare and costly firearm. There was, therefore, little question of its being considered for replacing matchlock as the standard firearm in the Mughal army.<sup>123</sup>

In the beginning of the seventeenth century, flintlock (which began to be used by 1620s)<sup>124</sup> had appeared in Europe. Till 1623, when Pietro Della Valle brought a musket fitted 'with a flintlock after the English fashion' it was quite unfamiliar to the people at Calicut.<sup>125</sup> Possibly, a similar situation existed in the Mughal empire. The description of a musket (*chihra-i banduq*) in an administrative manual (*dastur al 'amal*) compiled in 1696 shows, nevertheless that in the second half of the seventeenth century the flintlocks were not only known in the Mughal empire but were, perhaps, some times these were also made available to musketeers.<sup>126</sup> But again, these did not replace the matchlock entirely and decisively. Since the Indian muskets in the latter half of seventeenth century were praised for their superior quality iron,<sup>127</sup> but their technology is criticized for not having an efficient trigger and lock. Irvine reached the conclusion that the Mughal musketeers did not manufacture or use the flint-locks, and relied

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<sup>123</sup> W. Irvine, *The Army of the Indian Moghuls*, pp. 105-06

<sup>124</sup> Maurice Daumas (ed.), *A History of Technology and Invention*, vol.ii, pp. 488-9.

<sup>125</sup> *Travels of Pietro Della Valle in India*, tr. Edward Grey, London, 1989, p.371-72.

<sup>126</sup> Munshi Nand Ram Kayastha Shrivastava, *Siyagname*, p. 154.cf. I.A.Khan, *The Indian Response to Firearms (1300-1750)*, PIHC, Bangalore, 1997, p.23.

<sup>127</sup> Indians make excellent muskets and fowling-pieces. (Bernier, F. *Travels in the Mughal Empire, 1656-68*, p. 254). This matches Tavernier's statement about Golconda that the barrels of "their muskets are stronger than ours, because Indian iron is 'better and purer' which makes them 'not liable to burst.' Tavernier, Jean Baptiste *Travels in India, 1640-67*, i, p. 157.

heavily on matchlocks till about the middle of the eighteenth century. However, an account of a riot by artillerymen in 1729, by one Muhammad Bakhsh Ashob suggests that flintlocks were in use by first half of eighteenth century.<sup>128</sup>

Other skills and concepts coming from Europe around this time were such as marginally improved casting of bronze and brass guns, making it possible to produce heavy mortars as well as light cannons which were more dependable than the earlier ones. These new techniques appear to have been slowly adopted without much difficulty or resistance of any kind. Indians went in for heavy bronze guns which they could cast. But these became obsolete in the seventeenth century. Because of the failure to cast iron, the iron-guns were poorly built, consisting of wrought iron bars and cylinders held together held together by rings.

However, till 1650 European guns cast in iron were not as good in performance as their bronze counterparts.<sup>129</sup> These being made

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<sup>128</sup> Muhammad Bakhsh Ashob's eye-witness account of a riot by artillerymen in 1729 at the Jami' Masjid in Delhi testifies that the rioters were armed with flintlock (*chaqmaq*) muskets. (Muhammad Bakhsh Ashob, *Tarikh-i Shahadat-i Farrukh Siyar-ha-Julus-i Muhammad Shah* (compiled in 1787), vol.i, British Library, Or. 1832, f.61b. Cf. William Irvine, *The Army of the Indian Moghuls*, p. 106. The relevant line in Ashob's narrative reads: "Companions of Rumi Khan and Saiyad Arab Ali Khan, the officers (*minkbashian*) of the artillery who were equipped with the instruments of war, picked up flintlock and Ottoman muskets (*handuq-ha-i chiqmaqi va Rumi*) and European pistols and revolvers, all of which carried belts (*tir-band*) containing pellets." Note the bracketing of flintlocks with the Ottoman (Rumi) muskets. Cf. I.A. Khan, *The Indian Response to Firearms (1300-1750)*, p.38n.

<sup>129</sup> The inability of Indians to copy Europeans cast-iron cannons and adopt more efficient flint-locks as standard military muskets were perhaps the two most conspicuous failures in the field of fire-arms during the 17th century. Khan, I.A. *Gunpowder and Firearms-Warfare in Medieval India*, p.195.



very heavy were generally regarded as inferior substitutes for the bronze guns. Till then, the only manifest advantage of cast-iron cannon was its relative low cost which was, perhaps, neutralized in India by the option that was always there during the seventeenth century to switch to wrought-iron. Thus it is not surprising that throughout the seventeenth century Indian rulers did not evince much interest in European cast-iron guns. It was mostly the cast-bronze European guns that were coveted by them, although it was realized by the Mughal elite that Indian bronze guns were much inferior to the guns cast in Europe or made by European methods in other parts of the world.<sup>130</sup> Huge bronze mortars were supplemented by light field artillery, cast in brass or made of wrought-iron. Cast-iron was introduced in the mid-eighteenth century. Metallic shot and gun carriages were copied from Europe, but cast-bronze casings round the ends of wrought-iron barrels were a local invention. For muskets, bored barrels, and wheel-lock and flint-lock mechanisms were gradually introduced, involving a mixture of local developments and appropriations from abroad.<sup>131</sup>

The introduction of corned powder at about the same time was intimately bound up in the Artillery Revolution, for corned powder was more powerful – or at least more reliably powerful – than earlier “serpentine,” or dry-compounded, gunpowder. As far as quality of Indian gunpowder is concerned, early in 1616, an English traveller thought that Indian gunpowder was very good.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> William Irvine, *The Army of Indian Moghuls*, p.118; *EFI*, pp.250; *ibid.*, 1655-60, pp.159-60.

<sup>131</sup> For details see *The Military Revolution: Origins and First Tests Abroad* John F. Guilmartin, Jr., in *The Military Revolution Debate: Readings on the Military Transformation of Early Modern Europe*, ed. Clifford J. Rogers, Oxford, 1995.

<sup>132</sup> Terry, Edward *A Voyage to East India, &c., 1616-19*, p. 314.

But this opinion is contradicted in 1623 by the English factors at Masulipatam; they stated that though the Dutch made use of some powder for current needs, they essentially relied upon its import from Holland for purposes of storage because, as they point out, 'the other will not keepe, for being ill-corned it growes all into clodds'. They also added that had it been good, there was no reason why the Dutch should have carried a large quantity of saltpetre home every year from Pulicat.<sup>133</sup>

The case of matchcords is similar. The European cord was made of hemp or flax 'boiled in old wine dregs or in a solution of wood ash and saltpetre'; if well made, four or five inches of their cord would glow for an hour.<sup>134</sup> The Indian cord has been best described by Pyrard:

Of the same substance [coconut husk], too, are made matches for arquebuses; it keeps alight well and makes good charcoal, better indeed than ours; but in making matches it is prepared differently from the rope: for the husk or shell must be dried with the fruit, and not plucked green, nor steeped, nor beaten, and the fibre is spun and twisted. When they have made their match, they boil it with ashes. They never cut it, but merely snuff it as it burns away, as we do candles. However, where cotton is common and cocos scarce, they make their matches of cotton.<sup>135</sup>

As far as we know, no such detailed account is available for the later period, and therefore no inference could be drawn about the interaction between the two types of cords. We can only say that the Indian response may have been indifferent and parallel to

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<sup>133</sup> *EFI*, 1622-3, p. 336.

<sup>134</sup> R. W. Latham, *Antique Guns in Colour*, p. 18. Also, Nicholas du Quesne-Bird, *Firearms*, p. 55.

<sup>135</sup> De Laval, Francois Pyrard *The Voyages of Francois Pyrard De Laval*, vol. ii, pt ii, pp. 379-80.

what happened in the case of ropes. We also draw a blank when we turn to look for evidence relating to breech-loading: the Indians continued with muzzle-loading.<sup>136</sup> Generally, the hand-guns were fired like cannon. Fire was put in the priming-pan, and the guns were loaded with muzzle-loading rods.<sup>137</sup>

Another piece of weaponry which came from Europe was the pistol, which seems to have been used in Europe since 1547. The pistol was smaller than the arquebus, and was also different in that it was triggered by a wheel-lock, a very delicate and expensive mechanism.<sup>138</sup> This item does not find a place in the A'in-i-Akbari. As early as 1608, the Portuguese are reported to have carried it to Surat.<sup>139</sup> In 1633, a curious newly invented pistol that served also as a 'walking-staff', was sent from England to the English President at Surat.<sup>140</sup> In 1639, Mandelslo gave a fine pocket-pistol made in London' to Mirza Beg, a leading merchant of Cambay.<sup>141</sup> In about the same period, Manrique's pistol was examined by Indian soldiers as something novel.<sup>142</sup> Manucci tells us that a Dutchman presented Prince Dara with a pistol.<sup>143</sup> Again, Tavernier gave a pair of pistols, inlaid with silver, to the ten-year-old son of Sha'ista Khan, the governor of Bengal.<sup>144</sup> He also gave a pair of pocket-pistols decorated with silver to an officer of Mir Jumla in

<sup>136</sup> For a pictorial depiction of muzzle-loading during Jahangir's time, see M.Godhuis (ed.), *Indian Painting*, Colnoghi, London, 1978, Pl.16: 'Jahangir Hunting Lion from Elephant.'

<sup>137</sup> *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol.i, p. 119. For details see, S.P.Verma, *Art and Material Culture*, p.94.

<sup>138</sup> Montgomery, Bernard Law *A History of Warfare*, pp. 231-2.

<sup>139</sup> Cf. The Account of Hawkins in W.Foster, *Early Travels in India*, p. 76.

<sup>140</sup> *EFI*, 1630-3, pp. 281-2.

<sup>141</sup> S. Commissariat, *Mandelslo's Travels in Western India*, p. 45.

<sup>142</sup> Manrique, Sebastian *Travels, 1629-43*, vol. ii, p. 125.

<sup>143</sup> Manucci, Niccolao *Storia Do Mogor, 1656-1712*, vol.i, p. 344.

<sup>144</sup> Tavernier, Jean Baptiste *Travels in India, 1640-67*, vol.i, p. 130.

Golconda.<sup>145</sup> The English factors in 1683 presented a 'screwed' pistol to Kar Talab Khan, the governor of Surat.<sup>146</sup> These examples suggest that pistols were only bought from Europeans as there is no evidence that Indians manufactured pistols themselves, the main reason being that the Pistols were triggered by a wheel lock and this innovation was not adopted by Mughals, may be because Mughals used artillery mainly against forts and it was of no advantage in assaulting a fort. Irvine's opinion that it was unknown in India before the eighteenth century too is incorrect.<sup>147</sup>

The use of shells, grenades and stink-bombs appears to have caught the eyes of Indians, especially in the latter half of the seventeenth century. Perhaps these items were more useful on the high seas than on land, as we are informed by Manrique that they were 'used by the Portuguese in India in naval engagements, when grappling with the enemy.'<sup>148</sup> While Shah Jahan may not have shown much interest in this branch of artillery,<sup>149</sup> Aurangzeb is reported to have purchased 2,000 shells at 38 rupees per maund in 1658 from the English factors at Surat.<sup>150</sup> Again, in 1666, he bought mortars and grenades from the same source.<sup>151</sup> In the 1680s, grenades and stink-pots were made for the Mughal army in Bengal by a European priest.<sup>152</sup> The use of mortars was learnt from the English deserters by the men of the Siddi of Janjira when he assaulted Bombay. Thus, it is undeniable that the Indians used

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<sup>145</sup> *ibid.*, p. 271.

<sup>146</sup> *EFI*, 1678-84, p. 310.

<sup>147</sup> He writes that, 'the pistol was in use in India, to some extent, at any rate, early in the eighteenth century.' W. Irvine, *The Army of the Indian Mughals*, p. iii.

<sup>148</sup> Manrique, Sebastian *Travels*, 1629-43, vol.ii, p. 227.

<sup>149</sup> *EFI*, 1646-50, pp. 250, 256.

<sup>150</sup> *ibid.*, 1655-60, p. 159.

<sup>151</sup> *ibid.*, 1665-7, p. 166.

<sup>152</sup> John Burnell, *Bombay in the Days of Queen Anne*, pp. 143-44.

these new weapons occasionally in different parts of the country at least in the second half of the seventeenth century. But the art of manufacturing them does not seem to have been grasped by Indians; even their use had not become common. Perhaps, as Irfan Habib opines, the reason may have been that the Indian armies possessed an alternative weapon in the *ban* made of bamboo with iron cylinders containing combustible materials.<sup>153</sup>

Another step in the advancement of arms technology in Europe was that towards the end of the seventeenth century the use of a rest was abandoned because the guns had become 'more streamlined, better designed and slightly lighter in weight.'<sup>154</sup> In India, the earliest evidence on the use of a rest for handguns comes from the early seventeenth century.<sup>155</sup> But the Indian fork was smaller than its European counterpart: the latter was used for firing in a standing position in contrast to the Indian 'squatting' posture.<sup>156</sup> Depicting hunting-scenes, some Mughal paintings show

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<sup>153</sup> Irfan Habib, *The Technology and Economy of Mughal India*, p. 27. Also *EFI*, 1655-60, p. 279 n.; Bernier, F. *Travels in the Mughal Empire*, 1656-68, p. 48; William Irvine, *The Army of Indian Moghuls*, pp. 147-51.) Abul Fazl also mentions the *ban* (rocket) although these were obviously less effective. *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. i, p. 119, but this is not seen in the miniatures. S.P. Verma, *Art and Material Culture*, p. 95.

<sup>154</sup> R. Wilkinson Latham, *Antique Guns in Colour*, pp. 22, 25. Earlier, the musket was heavier than the arquebus, and hence it had to be rested on a fork. Also see, Montgomery, Bernard Law *A History of Warfare*, p. 231.

<sup>155</sup> Arnold and Wilkinson, *The Library of Chester Beatty*, Pl. 78 (b): 'Jahangir [?] Taking Aim.'

<sup>156</sup> Latham, R. Wilkinson *Antique Guns in Colour*, p. 24 (sketches). Bernier, F. *Travels in the Mughal Empire*, 1656-68 p. 217, for 'squatting' position.) Bernier's account shows the use of wooden forks by Indians in the 1660s. (Bernier, F. *Travels in the Mughal Empire*, 1656-68 p. 217. Thevenot, Jean de *The Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*, p. 244, where he paraphrases Bernier, and adds that 'they make but ill use of the rests'.).

the long barrel resting on the shoulders of a man, instead of a fork, while the hunter aims at the quarry.<sup>157</sup> In one painting, however, the hunter has been depicted using a rest.<sup>158</sup> It may be pointed out here that the use of a support or rest for heavy guns in India, in fact, predates that for handguns.<sup>159</sup> Musketeers squatted on the ground, resting their muskets on a kind of wooden fork. Perhaps *Narnal* did not need a fork.<sup>160</sup> A Mughal painting 'The arrest of Abu'l Ma'ali', designed by Basawan and painted by Shankar; from an Akbarnama manuscript, Mughal, ca. 1585 shows two men with 'long-barrelled hand-guns with handles rested on their shoulders.'<sup>161</sup> The gun called the *jaza'il*, which is being used in a siege, is also shown resting on a tripod.<sup>162</sup> Steingass has described the *jaza'il* as a large musket, a wall-piece swivel, a rifle used with a prong or rest.<sup>163</sup> The tripod called *shakh-i tufang* was the part of the equipment of matchlocks.<sup>164</sup> It was made of wood and was fastened with iron chains. The heavy cannon could also be placed at an angle. For this purpose, a triangular wooden stand consisting of a sloping platform was employed.<sup>165</sup>

<sup>157</sup> Cf. BM (OA): Mughal Painting, no. 1974 6-17.021 (50). Arnold and Wilkinson, iii, Pl. 90: 'Aurangzeb [?] Shooting Nilga'is.' Barrett, D. and Gray, *Basil Painting of India*, (Cleveland, 1961), p. 113: 'Shah Jahan Hunting Deer.'

<sup>158</sup> See Krishnadasa, Rai *Mughal Miniatures*, Lalit Kala Academy, (Delhi, 1955), Pl. 9.

<sup>159</sup> See, for example, the Akbarnama illustrations, vol. i, no. 74/117 (Victoria and Albert Museum). cf. A.J. Qaiser, *Indian Response*, p. 53.

<sup>160</sup> *Narnal* had a long barrel mounted on a butt and was fired with the butt resting on the right shoulder. For details, see S.P. Verma, *Art and Material Culture*, p. 94).

<sup>161</sup> Beach, M.C. *Mughal and Rajput Painting*, p. 65.

<sup>162</sup> *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. i, p. 119. This is a long-barrelled gun. It has not been mentioned by Abu'l Fazl.

<sup>163</sup> Steingass, *Persian-English Dictionary*, s.r., *jazail*.

<sup>164</sup> *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. i, p. 120.

<sup>165</sup> S.P. Verma, *Art and Material Culture*, p. 94-95.

Indians were also purchasing arms and ammunition from the Europeans. Making wrought-iron barrels for guns, which was, apparently, not practised in India before it was introduced here from Europe in the beginning of the sixteenth century.<sup>166</sup> In 1618 we find the Dutch selling some brass ordnances to the Indian authorities.<sup>167</sup> Around 1644, the English factors at Surat sent one of their ships to Bassein to fetch some great guns made there for a new junk built for the 'princesses accompt' (Princess Jahan Ara' ?),<sup>168</sup> We have a number of references relating to the period between 1644 and 1660 to the sale of English guns and cannons to Indians.<sup>169</sup> Later in 1666, the English factors struck a deal with Aurangzeb to sell him several large brass guns, besides mortars and shells.<sup>170</sup>

Not only were the Europeans employed in army, they were also engaged in manufacture of arms, which depicts another aspect of their perception of Europeans as being adept in making armament, although significantly, almost all our relevant information comes from the second half of the seventeenth century. Mir Jumla is reported to have had in his sendee a certain Maille,

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<sup>166</sup> *Travels of Ludovico di Varthema, 1503-1508*, tr. J.W. Jones and G.P. Badger, London, 1863, pp.262, where there is a reference to a Jew among the Portuguese renegades making four mortars of iron at Calicut.

<sup>167</sup> *EFI*, 1618-21, p. 92, n. 2. 250.

<sup>168</sup> *EFI*, 1642-5. p. 148.

<sup>169</sup> *ibid.*, 1646-50, pp. 166, 213, 250. 254, 257; 1655-60, pp. 10, 12, 166, 169, 212, 264 and n. i.

<sup>170</sup> *ibid.* 1665-7, PP. 155-56. Apart from guns, shot also was procured from the English by the Surat authorities 'cf. *EF*, 1618-21. p. 238. Shot was made by the English in large quantities at Surat in 1625 ;cf. *ibid.*, pp. 73. 85.

from Amsterdam, to establish gun foundries.<sup>171</sup> In 1663, he employed Thomas Pratt, an Englishman, to build boats and manufacture ammunition in Bengal.<sup>172</sup> In 1666, Aurangzeb asked the English factors to send him 'five gun-founders and two engineers or pioneers.'<sup>173</sup> More definite evidence comes from the last decade of the seventeenth century in Bengal where, we are told, a priest of the Augustine order had established an armoury for the Mughal army with enough weapons to arm six hundred men. The armoury consisted of 'carbine, bayonet and granado', besides a vast number of stink-pots being supplied from the four or five forges in his yard, so that he hath in a manner quite turned the Church into an arsenal.<sup>174</sup>

The relative lack of dexterity of Mughal soldiers even in the use of fire-arms is an indicator of acceptance of European soldiers' superior handling skills, as far as fire-arms were concerned, till almost the end of the seventeenth century. Speaking of the Mughal army, Bernier refers to 'the artillerymen who receive great pay, particularly all the Frangis or Christians-Portuguese, English, Dutch, German, and French; fugitives from Goa, and from the Dutch and English Companies.'<sup>175</sup> Careri describes his meetings with Europeans, especially the French, in the 'Christian Gunner's

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<sup>171</sup> Tavernier, Jean Baptiste *Travels in India, 1640-67*, vol. ii, pp. 289-90.

<sup>172</sup> Manucci, Niccolao *Storia Do Mogor, 1656-1712*, vol. ii. p. 87; *EFI*, 1660-4, p. 294. Pratt also made swivel guns.

<sup>173</sup> *EFI*, 1665-7, p.185.

<sup>174</sup> Burnell, John *Bombay in the Days of Queen Anne*, pp. 143-4.

<sup>175</sup> Bernier, F. *Travels in the Mughal Empire, 1656-68*, p. 217; also Careri in the *Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*, tr. and ed. S. N. Sen, p. 244.



Quarter in Aurangzeb's camp.<sup>176</sup> Mir Jumla is reported to have taken the fort of Gandikot with the help of French, English, Dutch and Italian gunners.<sup>177</sup> When Manucci learnt that Prince Dara wished to employ him, he rejoiced at the news because he was told that 'Europeans who served this prince had a good life and received adequate pay.'<sup>178</sup> The men of the Siddi of Janjira, who attacked the Bombay fort with devastating effect, were alleged to have been taught the 'art of mineing, and sheltering themselves in their trenches and Basket-works' by deserters from the English forces.<sup>179</sup> A European eye-witness states that they learnt the use of mortars also from the same source.<sup>180</sup> Later, the witness himself accepted employment in Bengal as a 'commander of 100 European soldiers' in the Mughal army.<sup>181</sup> Prince Murad Bakhsh enlisted the help of Dutch miners to blow up the walls of Surat fort.<sup>182</sup>

The purpose of these selected examples is to give an idea of the widespread practice of employing Europeans in artillery. Their presence in the army was crucial in determining the course of an expedition or conquest. It is owing to their qualitative significance that Prince Dara on one occasion to have deprived Mir Jumla of the eighty European artillerymen in his service through bribery.<sup>183</sup> Sha'ista Khan did the same to win over European naval officers of

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<sup>176</sup> Careri in *Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*, pp. 217, 218. Also see Tavernier, Jean Baptiste *Travels in India, 1640-67*, vol. i, p. 59.

<sup>177</sup> Tavernier, Jean Baptiste *Travels in India, 1640-67*, vol. i, p. 284, 288.

<sup>178</sup> Manucci, Niccolao *Storia Do Mogor, 1656-1712*, vol. i, pp. 93, 95.

<sup>179</sup> Ovington, John *A Voyage to Surat in the year 1689*, p. 94.

<sup>180</sup> Burnell, John *Bombay in the Days of Queen Anne*, p. 19.

<sup>181</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 140-1.

<sup>182</sup> Bernier, F. *Travels in the Mughal Empire, 1656-68*, p. 31.

<sup>183</sup> Niccolao *Storia Do Mogor, 1656-1712*, vol. i, p. 226.

the King of Arakan.<sup>184</sup> It is natural for us to expect that exposure to European gunners and sappers over such a long period must have imparted considerable skill to their Indian counterparts. Perhaps the exact degree of skill so acquired by the Indians cannot be gauged; nevertheless, some indications are available. Bernier remarks:

Formerly, when the Mogols were little skilled in the management of artillery, the pay of the Europeans was rather liberal, and there are still some remaining who receive two hundred roupies a month; but now the King admits them with difficulty into service, and limits their pay to thirty-two *roupies*.<sup>185</sup> The reduction in salary is corroborated by Fryer who notes: 'formerly for good pay, now very ordinary, having not above 30 or 40 *rupees* a month.'<sup>186</sup> Later, Careri paraphrases Bernier, and then adds: 'Some of them formerly had 200 roupies a Month, but now the Moghuls have learnt somewhat of the Art they have less.'<sup>187</sup> Thus, the scaling down of Europeans' salary in Mughal service has been ascribed by Bernier and Careri to the declining dependence of Indians on their skills, Indians having somewhat improved their own. However, European artillerymen continued to be employed in Mughal army. As Manucci observed, European artillerymen in Mughal service 'had only to take aim; as for the rest—the fatigue of raising, lowering, loading, and firing—this was the business of artificers or labourers kept for the purpose.'<sup>188</sup> In 1666, the English factors doubted that Aurangzeb's Indian soldiers could handle cannons and mortars on their own.<sup>189</sup> The case with 'light' guns was similar.

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<sup>184</sup> Jean Baptiste *Travels in India, 1640-67*, vol.i, p. 129.

<sup>185</sup> Bernier, F. *Travels in the Mughal Empire, 1656-68*, p. 217.

<sup>186</sup> John Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia being Nine Years' Travels, 1672-81*, vol.ii, p. 112.

<sup>187</sup> Careri in *Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*, p. 244.

<sup>188</sup> Manucci, Niccolao *Storia Do Mogor, 1656-1712*, vol. i, p. 95.

<sup>189</sup> *EFI*, 1665-7, p. 66.

So far as swords are concerned, the European accounts show Indian preference for crooked swords in contrast to the straight ones in general use in Europe along with other types. That is why it was noted in 1614 that 'streight swordes' could not be sold at Surat.<sup>190</sup> The English factors asked their Company early in the seventeenth century to send one or two thousand crooked swordblades 'of this country fashion' for sale and presents.<sup>191</sup> Terry in 1612 noticed that the Indian 'curved swords were very sharp, but for want of skill in those that temper them, will break rather then bend.'<sup>192</sup> Indians wanted swords with a better quality of metal so that they did not break when bent.<sup>193</sup> To meet this demand, the English furnished them with English swords at high prices that will bow and become streight againe.<sup>194</sup> In the 1660s, Thevenot tells us that 'the swords made by the Indians are very brittle', and consequently the English brought 'good ones' from England.<sup>195</sup> The Indian curved sword did not however prevent its wielder from showing dexterity in battle. Olafsson is quite sure that Indians are 'surprisingly skilful in the use of arms, both with swords with curved blades.'<sup>196</sup> One weakness of the curved sword is, however, recorded by Fryer. When asked to explain the utility of a European rapier in actual battle, he said that since the European custom in

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<sup>190</sup> Farewell's account in *The Voyage of Nicholas Downton to the East Indies, 1614-15*, Hakluyt Society, (London, 1939), p. 165.

<sup>191</sup> *Letters Received*, vol.i, p. 239; ii, p. 301.

<sup>192</sup> Terry, Edward *A Voyage to East India, &c., 1616-19*, in William Foster (ed.) in *Early Travels in India 1583-1619*, Reprint, (Delhi, 1968), p. 314.

<sup>193</sup> *Letters Received*, vol.iii, p. 9.

<sup>194</sup> Terry, Edward *A Voyage to East India, &c., 1616-19*, p. 314.

<sup>195</sup> Thevenot, Jean de *The Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*, p. 61.

<sup>196</sup> *The Life of Icelandier Jon Olafsson*, tr. D.B. Phillpotts, Hakluyt Society, 2<sup>nd</sup> Series, (London, 1931), vol.ii, p.145.

war was to appear 'all armed, the Indian sword might not be of much use whereas the 'sharp-appointed weapons would pierce the junctures of the Harness, or the pleats of a coat of Mail.'<sup>197</sup> Again, Tavernier stated that the European method of point-fence was unknown to Indians.<sup>198</sup> The swords in the Akbarnama illustration are curved swords, effective only for slashing from horseback. The curved sword appears in many depictions of the Mughal emperor, even when he was at leisure in his harem. A hunting scene<sup>199</sup> shows Akbar and his attendants on horseback with bow-arrow and curved sword.<sup>200</sup> 'The arrest of Abu'l Ma'ali,' designed by Basawan and painted by Shankar, from an Akbarnama manuscript, Mughal, ca. 1585 shows two men with 'straight' swords and two men with long-barrelled hand-guns with handles rested on their shoulders.<sup>201</sup> Akbar reportedly was fond of carrying a European sword and dagger.<sup>202</sup>

Coal had been discovered in Europe as a new source of heating, and it was used for a few selected purposes during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>203</sup> 'Sea-coal' as a new source of fuel, are first mentioned in 1612-13 when these were brought to Surat by the English and were carried 'for a wonder to the Mogul' (Jahangir). Nothing is known of Indian response to this

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<sup>197</sup> John Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia being Nine Years' Travels, 1672-81*, vol.i, p. 336.

<sup>198</sup> Rawson, P. S. *The Indian Sword*, (London, 1968), p. 23.

<sup>199</sup> 'Prince Akbar hunting a nilgae,' from the Fitzwilliam Album, probably at Delhi, ca. 1555-1560.

<sup>200</sup> Beach, M.C. *Mughal and Rajput Painting*, p.24. A painting of 'Raja Jaswant Singh of Jodhpur and courtiers,' Rajput, Rajasthan at Jodhpur, ca. 1645, shows him with a 'straight' sword. (*ibid.*, p.125).

<sup>201</sup> *ibid.* p.65.

<sup>202</sup> Fr. Antonio Monserrate, *Mongolicae Commentaries*, tr. J.S. Hoyland and S. N. Bannerji, *The Commentary of Father Monserrate, S.J. on his Journey to the Court of Akbar*, p. 198.

<sup>203</sup> Cf. Richard Wilson, *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, vol.iv, p. 105.

new fuel.<sup>204</sup> Although, at this time, Europeans did not use coal in a way that confirmed its utility in the eyes of Indians, nor did they take to coal mining in India, which started only from 1774.

The printing of paper had evolved in various stages across the centuries and across the continents. In the sixteenth century, the developed technique of printing press (in the twelfth century, papermaking technology from China reached Spain through Arabs. Chinese technique of wooden-block printing was transferred to West between 1250 and 1350) was brought to India when European movable metal types<sup>205</sup> were brought to Goa around 1550 by the Portuguese, and in 1556 a Portuguese missionary, Juan de Bustamante, started operating it.<sup>206</sup> Printing Press, when introduced in India by the Europeans, was not adopted by the Mughal rulers. Abul Fazl<sup>207</sup> makes no mention of the Printing Press while dealing with the art of writing. Although Abul Fazl did realize the importance of the written word, as he says that 'if it was not for the letter, the spoken word would soon die, and no keepsake would be left us of those that are gone by,'<sup>208</sup> he lent no support to the printed word. The Mughals did have several opportunities of coming into contact with printed materials from

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<sup>204</sup> The Rev. Patrick Copland's narrative in '*The Voyage of Thomas Best*, ed. W. Foster, Hakluyt Society, 2<sup>nd</sup> Series, London, 1934, p. 208.

<sup>205</sup> For the development of printing in Europe, see S. H. Steinberg, *Five Hundred Years of Printing*, 3rd ed., Suffolk, 1977.

<sup>206</sup> See L. Cardon and H. Hosten, *Earliest Jesuit Printing in India*, (tr. From the Spanish of the Rev. Cecilio Gomez Roddes, S.J., JAS (Bengal), New Series, vol. ix, March 1913, p. 153; Cf. A. K. Priolkar, *The Printing Press in India; Its Beginnings and Early Developments*, Bombay, 1958, pp. 2-9). (The earliest surviving book printed in India is the *Compendio Spiritual da Vida Christae*, printed in Portuguese at Goa in 1561. It is preserved in the New York Public Library).

<sup>207</sup> *Ain-i-Akbari*, tr. p. 103, 113.

<sup>208</sup> *ibid.*, p. 103.

Europe. The first Jesuit mission to Akbar in 1580 presented him with seven volumes—out of eight—of Plantin's polyglot Bible<sup>209</sup> printed in five languages—Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic, Latin and Syriac.<sup>210</sup> Akbar had acquired a large number of printed books from Europe which were lodged in the imperial library for fifteen years when, in 1595, he gave away a few of them to the third Jesuit mission, along with the volumes of the polyglot Bible.<sup>211</sup> Although we do not have any record of the response at Akbar's court to the art of printing, it is obvious that it was not encouraging. It did not arise any curiosity even in Fathullah Shirazi, the scientist at the court who served Akbar from 1583 to 1588.<sup>212</sup>

Even 'Abd'ul Sattar, an eminent scholar, whom Akbar had commissioned to study the language of the Frangis' and who is reported to have studied under the guidance of Father Xavier and later collaborated with him in translating his Latin work into Persian (subsequently printed in Europe and distributed in India), did not show any interest in this new technology.<sup>213</sup>

Jahangir did take some limited interest, however. In 1606, at Lahore, the Emperor is reported to have expressed doubts about types being cast in the Persian script during a discussion with the Jesuits, whereupon the latter promptly dispelled them by showing him their copy of the Arabic version of the Gospels which they had

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<sup>209</sup> Francis Goldie, *First Christian Missions to the Great Mogul*, London, 1897, p. 63; also, Maclagan, E. *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, p. 191

<sup>210</sup> Warren Chappell, *A History of the Printed Word*, London, 1972, p. 106.

<sup>211</sup> For details of such books, Maclagan, E. *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, pp. 191-2.

<sup>212</sup> See Alavi, M.A. and Rahman, A. *Fathullah Shirazi-A Sixteenth Century Indian Scientist*, (New Delhi, 1968).

<sup>213</sup> E. Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, p.204.

obtained from an Italian in 1604 at Agra.<sup>214</sup> This was probably one of the copies printed in 1591 at the Vatican.<sup>215</sup> But Jahangir's interest evaporated quickly since we do not hear of this topic being raised again. The Portuguese presented a printing press to Jahangir but he showed no interest in their gift.

From the early period of Shahjahan's reign onwards, there were some printed books in both Arabic and Persian scripts in circulation. For example, Father Jerome Xavier's works in Persian were published in 1638 and 1639. A book in Arabic published in 1649 on theological refutation of some Islamic work was distributed in India. When it was brought for propaganda to the court of Shah Jahan in 1651, his Wazir, Sa'dullah Khan, refused to accept it.<sup>216</sup> In 1674-5, a printing press at Bombay was imported from England by the English Company but it was not on the request of any Mughal official but on request of a merchant named Bhimji Parak.<sup>217</sup>

It is therefore hardly surprising that none of the European nations, except the Portuguese, established a press in India during this period. Even as late as in 1689, a European noticed the absence of printing among Indians, which shows that printing was not adopted by Mughals even by the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>218</sup> While the disinterest of the ulema and service class may be

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<sup>214</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 211, 215.

<sup>215</sup> W.T. Berry and H.B. Poole, *Annals of Printing*, London, 1966, p. 112.

<sup>216</sup> E. Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, pp. 208-9.

<sup>217</sup> I.O., Home Correspondence, E/3/31, letter no. 3538. cf. A.J. Qaiser, *Indian Response to European Technology and Culture*, p. 60-63.

<sup>218</sup> He sought to explain it as follows: 'Neither have they endeavour'd to transcribe our Art of Printing; that would diminish the Repute and Livelihood of their Scrivans, who maintain numerous families by the pen.' (Ovington, John *A Voyage to Surat in the year 1689*, p. 149)

explained in the terms of their apprehension regarding the low-borns acquiring knowledge through better availability of books by means of printing, the callousness shown by the elite was not simply their fetish for calligraphy, but a socio-cultural set-up which did not require large scale circulation of books which should have needed printing.

Abul Fazl, while writing about horticulture, does not mention any European contribution to it. The first reference that we get of grafting technique in horticulture, which was introduced by Portuguese, is from Jahangir's time. One of his nobles, Muqarrab Khan's famous gardens at Kairana where he planted fruits, especially mangoes,<sup>219</sup> had fruits also from Europe (*Firang*).<sup>220</sup> Unfortunately we do not know about the varieties of mangoes or other fruits that he planted, nor whether he made use of grafting techniques, through which the Portuguese had produced for him the first grafted mango, the Alfonso. Jahangir in his memoirs states that the pine-apples at his time came from the harbour towns held by the Portuguese.<sup>221</sup>

Tobacco and the *huqqa* were introduced in the court of Akbar early in the seventeenth century, and thenceforth, smoking became extremely widespread in India.<sup>222</sup> The Mughal elite used glass and jade *huqqa* bowls. Some of such *huqqas* of the late seventeenth century have been listed by Ashton.<sup>223</sup> Mughal elite

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<sup>219</sup> Khan, Shahnawaz, *Maathir-ul-Umara*, tr. H. Beveridge, revised, annotated and completed by Baini Prasad, (Patna, 1979) vol.iii, pp. 381-2.)

<sup>220</sup> *ibid.* p.93-94.

<sup>221</sup> *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, ed. Sayyid Ahmad, p. 3.

<sup>222</sup> Asad Beg, *Ahwal-i Asad Beg Qazwini*, MS. BM. OR. 1996 (Rotograph in Department of History, Aligarh Muslim University), ff. 36-37.

<sup>223</sup> *John Marshall in India-Notes and Observation in Bengal*, ed. S.A.Khan, (London, 1927), p. 281.



mainly procured hubble-bubbles either in gift or by purchase. We only find evidence of its small scale manufacture in some parts of Bihar in the latter half of the seventeenth century. John Marshall (1670), for example, speaks of the manufacture of 'neat hubble-bubbles' at Bhagalpur<sup>224</sup> in Bihar, although he leaves it uncertain whether the bowls were made of glass or the coconut. However, it seems that the hubble-bubbles of European make were still held in esteem as we get a reference where the governor of Surat in 1697 even forced the English factors to sell him twenty-two glass hubble-bubbles (which were meant for Agha 'Peeree', a merchant, as the former wanted to resell them in the town to his profit). It was as late as in 1748 that a Persian glossary compiled in the said year notes that Azimabad (Patna) produced the finest glassware including (glass) hubble-bubbles (*qalian*) which were taken by merchants to other towns.<sup>225</sup> But it cannot be determined whether the technique of making glass bowls was learnt under Persian or European influence, since even those of Persian make came mostly through the European agency.<sup>226</sup>

The art of Diamond polishing was criticized by the European travelers in the seventeenth century. Fryer commented that diamonds cut by the Indians fell short of the *Fringies* in Fancy, and that is why they were sold mostly in India; to Europe the diamonds were exported uncut and cut 'to more advantage.'<sup>227</sup> Tavernier, the European expert in precious stones and diamonds, firmly opines;

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<sup>224</sup> Honey, W.B. *Glass-A Handbook and Guide to the Museum Collection* (Victoria and Albert Museum), (London, 1946), p. 70.

<sup>225</sup> Honey, W.B. *Glass-A Handbook and Guide to the Museum Collection*, p. 70.

<sup>226</sup> I.O., Surat Letters, 0/36/6, July 1703, pp. 841-6. cf. A.J. Qaiser, *Indian Response to European Technology and Culture*, p.77.

<sup>227</sup> John Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia being Nine Years' Travels, 1672-81*, vol.i, p. 285.

'The Indians are unable to give the stones so lively a polish as we give them in Europe.'<sup>228</sup> It was for this reason that European jewellers were accorded a warm reception in India. As early as 1584, William Leeds, an English gem-expert, accepted service under Akbar.<sup>229</sup> Jahangir mentions a European jeweller under his employment on whom he bestowed the title '*hunarmand*.'<sup>230</sup> When Mir Jumla gave Aurangzeb a large uncut diamond, it was returned to him so that he could have it cut by an expert. Among the accounts of Tavernier,<sup>231</sup> Fryer<sup>232</sup> and Thevenot,( Thevenot, p. 138)only the first has attempted to find out the reasons for the inferior quality of the diamonds cut and polished in India, Explaining the inability of Indians to impart a polish comparable to diamonds polished in Europe, Tavernier says:

'this, I believe is due to the fact that their wheel does not run so smoothly as ours. For, being made of steel, in order to grind it on the emery, of which it has heed every twenty four hours, it has to be taken off the tree, and it cannot be replaced so as to run as evenly as it should so. If they possessed the iron wheel as we do, for which one does not require emery but the file, it not being necessary to remove it from the tree is order to file it, they could give the stones a better polish than they do, it is desirable that it should be done every twelve hours.'<sup>233</sup> Besides, Tavernier was of the opinion that the process of 'weighting' the stone which could cause flaws was not current in Europe; but he keenly notes that this

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<sup>228</sup> Tavernier, Jean Baptiste *Travels in India, 1640-67*, vol. ii, p. 58.

<sup>229</sup> Manucci, Niccolao *Storia Do Mogor, 1656-1712*, vol. i, pp. 237-8; Tavernier, Jean Baptiste *Travels in India, 1640-67*, vol.i, p. 396.

<sup>230</sup> Tavernier, Jean Baptiste *Travels in India, 1640-67*, vol.ii, pp. 56-9.

<sup>231</sup> *ibid.*, vol. ii, pp. 56-9.

<sup>232</sup> John Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia being Nine Years' Travels, 1672-81*, vol. i, pp. 284-5.

<sup>233</sup> Tavernier, Jean Baptiste *Travels in India, 1640-67*, vol.ii, p. 58.

process did not produce flaws when practised in India because the wooden wheel, which caused the steel one to revolve, did not run as fast as theirs in Europe because its motion was slowed down, first, by incessantly anointing it with oil and sprinkling it with powder; and secondly, the wooden wheel was not more than three feet in diameter while the European one was bigger. On the other hand, he appreciates the skill of Indians in cutting the 'knots' in a stone, which, as he says, 'our diamond-cutters in Europe would experience great difficulty in doing, and as a general rule would be unwilling to undertake it.'<sup>234</sup> Again, in another context, we are told that the Indian miners strike blows at the diamond-bearing rocks with a heavy iron crowbar which sometimes fracture the diamonds; but this rough handling was duly compensated by cleaving the stone along the fracture-line in a way better than that in Europe.<sup>235</sup> European lapidaries in India, especially those who were employed by the rulers or nobles, must have used their own devices for diamond-cutting and polishing. But evidence is not forthcoming to identify Mughal response in this area. Most probably Indian experts continued with their traditional tools and methods: for the cutting of sapphires and diamonds, Thevenot observes: 'They cut Saphirs with a Bow of wire; whilst one workman handles the Bow, another poures continually upon the stone very liquid solution of the powder of white Emrod [emery stone] made in water; and so they easily compass their work.'<sup>236</sup>

The use of the 'bow of wire' is corroborated by a rare Mughal painting, although it does not depict Thevenot's 'other' workman

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<sup>234</sup> *ibid.*, p. 58-9.

<sup>235</sup> *ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>236</sup> Thevenot, Jean de *The Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*, p. 138.

who poured the liquid solution of emery upon the stone.<sup>237</sup> It is clear that the Mughal king or elite did not show interest in the difference of technology involved. There is no evidence to show that even the gearing was improved.

The Mughal response to European science and technology was an ambiguous one, and while certain European technological development were treated with indifference, even disdain, there were others that were more readily accepted. One of the things which determined the Mughal response was 'utility,' but this 'utility' or need was not that of the common subjects, but the rulers and the ruling aristocracy. At the same time, a utility-based interpretation of the Mughal response to European technology is inadequate, for in several instances, resistance to European technology emerged from social and cultural factors, as well.

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<sup>237</sup> Hajek, Luber *Indian Miniatures of the Moghul School*, (London, 1960), Pl. 16. For the earliest pictorial depiction of the bow-drill, see *Miftah-ul Fuzala*, f. 161 b. For the use of another device, that is, belt-drive, see John Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia being Nine Years' Travels, 1672-81*, vol.i, p. 285. There is no evidence that Indians adopted this from Europe.

# Chapter IV:

## Mughal perception of Christianity

### *Plates:*

- Fig. i *Rudolfo Acqaviva and another Jesuit debating with Muslim Divines before Akbar*
- Fig. ii. *Copy of European Engravings*
- Fig.iii. *Folio from the Gulshan Album showing European object*
- Fig. iv. *The Nativity of the Christ*
- Fig. v. *The Nativity of Christ*
- Fig. vi. *The Virgin and Child by Kesu*
- Fig.vii. *The Martyrdom of St. Cecilia*
- Fig.viii. *Tobias' Angel*
- Fig. ix. *Virgin and Angel*
- Fig. x. *Jahangir Holding the Picture of Madonna*

### Mughal Perception of Christianity

The Mughal elite perception of Christianity had several dimensions. The Mughal court created an atmosphere for a mutually enriching dialogue between Islam and Christianity over theological and metaphysical issues. However, the influence of Christianity over the Mughal society was not confined to the interaction between the intellectuals and theologians of the Islamic world and the Christian West. It went much wider and seems to have extended to the whole of the Mughal culture. There is even considerable evidence of Christian influence over Mughal art and architecture.<sup>1</sup> This makes the whole question of the Mughal perception of Christianity quite significant indeed!

We find the first mention of contact of Mughals with Christianity when Jesuit Fathers from Goa and its neighbourhood came to meet Akbar after the siege of Surat.<sup>2</sup> In 1576, Akbar invited Father Julian Periera, the Vicar-General of Bengal to Fatehpur Sikri. Monserrate gives 1578 March as the date of Julian Pereira's arrival.<sup>3</sup> Badauni, however, attests to the presence of Portuguese priests at the court during 1575-76<sup>4</sup> in these words: 'There came experienced theologians from Europe (*Afranja*), whom they call 'Padre' (*Padhari*). Their absolute legislator (*Mujtahid-i Kamil*) who can alter all decrees in view of circumstances of the time, and

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<sup>1</sup> Ebba Koch talks about a new architectural motif in the second half of seventeenth century, i.e. the Baluster column, which soon became a widely employed motif. Its earliest examples are found in Shahjahan's contribution to three great fortress-palaces of the Mughal Emperors in Agra, Lahore and Delhi. See for details, Ebba Koch, 'The Baluster Column-A European motif in Mughal Architecture and its meaning' in Monica Juneja, *Architecture in Medieval India*, Delhi, 2001, p.328.

<sup>2</sup> Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, tr. H. Beveridge, vol. iii, Delhi, second Indian reprint, 1977, p.37.

<sup>3</sup> Monserrate, *Relecam*, JASB, VIII, 1912, p.218. cf. E. Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, p. 23.

<sup>4</sup> Badauni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, tr. W.H. Lowe, vol. ii, Delhi, reprint, p.215.

kings too cannot defy his authority, is called the 'Pope' (*Papa*). They brought the Bible (*injl*) and gave arguments in favour of the Trinity and proving the truth of Christianity (*nasraniyat*), began to spread the Christian faith (*millat-i Isawi*). His Majesty instructed Prince Murad to take some lessons from the Bible, and Shaikh Abul Fazl was appointed to translate it. In place of the invocation 'Bismillah (In the name of God),' he wrote (in the Gospel): 'Ai nami vey Gesu Christu' (O whose name is Jesus Christ (*Zhazhu Kristu*)<sup>5</sup> i.e. 'O whose name is Benevolent and Bountiful'. These accursed people brought in a description of *Dajjal* (Anti-Christ) and applied his attributes to our Prophet, peace be on him, the very opposite of all *Dajjals*.<sup>6</sup> Apart from having a religious discussion with him, Akbar also wanted him 'to dispute with the *Mullahs*, in the royal ante-chamber' in his presence.<sup>7</sup> The same year, another Jesuit father, Antoine Cabral was sent by the Viceroy of Portugal in India to the court of Akbar. Likewise, another Portuguese priest, Pietro Tavares also visited the court at Fatehpur Sikri in 1578,<sup>8</sup> whom Akbar allowed to stay at his court for some years to have discussion on Christian religion.<sup>9</sup> Hence even before the arrival of first Jesuit mission at Akbar's court, some interest in Christianity was already evident. Nevertheless it was with the arrival of the first Jesuit mission in 1580 that there was a much livelier appreciation of Christianity. Akbar sent embassy to Goa with letters to Viceroy, Archbishop and Jesuit Fathers (as advised by Father Pereira who told him of Jesuit Mission in the College of St. Paul in Goa telling him that he would gain much more by hearing to them) to send 'two learned priests.' Accordingly, Father Rudolf Aquaviva, Antony Monserrate and Francis Henriquez set out on November 10, 1579 and

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<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*p.267.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, p. 260.

<sup>7</sup> C.H.Payne, *Akbar and the Jesuits*, London,1926, pp.15-16.

<sup>8</sup> Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, tr. H. Beveridge, vol. iii, Delhi, second Indian reprint,1977, P.349-50.

<sup>9</sup> C.H. Payne, *Akbar and the Jesuits*, London,1926, pp.14.

reached Fatehpur Sikri on 27 February, 1580.<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately, Akbar's adviser and minister Abul Fazl, who met the mission, has not left his description of Christianity or even an account of his meeting with the Jesuits in his writings. He only writes about the Jesuit mission that 'at this time, the Christian scholars (*fihsufan-i Nisara*) submitted strong arguments against the worldly learned of Muslim law at the imperial court; and learned controversy ensued.'<sup>11</sup>

The religious discussions were held at *Ibadat Khana* in which *ulema* participated along with Portuguese Fathers, Armenians and other Christians of 'Eastern' origin. These *munazara* debates<sup>12</sup> between the Christian scholars and the experts of Islamic law in the king's presence<sup>13</sup> provided him a direct exposure to the areas of difference between the two religions and also gave him a more clear insight into the principles of Christianity which must have helped shape his perception of the Christian religion. Akbar occasionally intercepted to give his views, sometimes in favour of Jesuits, and sometimes in defense of the '*ulema*.'

In the first Jesuit Mission Fathers reported that they were able to engage him in 'frequent debates concerning an infinite variety of points-the trinity, God-the Son, His death, Muhammad, Alcoran, the day of judgement, death, resurrection and various philosophical and political subjects,<sup>14</sup> and every aspect of doctrine, ritual and customs dividing the

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<sup>10</sup> S.J.Monserrate, *The Commentary of Father Monserrate*, p.2. There is also a miniature in Akbarnama depicting 'Father Rudolfo Aquaviva and another Jesuit debating with Muslim Divines before Akbar,'; see p.135, fig.i. cf. T.W.Arnold and J.V.S. Wilkinson (ed.), *Indian Miniatures: The Library of Chester Beatty*, Delhi, 1936.

<sup>11</sup> *Akbarnama*, vol. iii, p. 272.

<sup>12</sup> *Munazara* is an Urdu term, commonly used for a religious disputation or debate, derives from an Arabic root meaning 'to look at.' The accounts of some early *Munazaras* between Muslims and Christians, particularly during Abbasid era were held. Akbar assigned the *Ibadat Khana* in Fatehpur Sikri in 1579 to holding of religious *munazara*.

<sup>13</sup> Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, vol.iii, P.272.

<sup>14</sup> S.J.Monserrate, *The Commentary of Father Monserrate*, p.50.



two religions was at least touched upon, 'in both the Christian religion and their own.'<sup>15</sup> Father Rudolf, who had studied Quran in translation, contended that Gospel having been foretold in Old Testament must be superior to the Quran which was not. He also argued that as Muhammad had acknowledged the divine origin of the Gospel he was inconsistent in refusing to acknowledge the divinity of Christ.<sup>16</sup> His other arguments dealt with the character of Muhammad's heaven, the witnesses to Christ's divinity, the mystery of incarnation and the Two natures of Christ and the inconsistency of Quran in its varying attitude towards the character of Christ's death.<sup>17</sup> He once asked Father Monserrate why Christ did not come down from the Cross, why did he allow St. Thomas to put fingers into his wounds and what was meant by 'sitting at the right hand of God.'<sup>18</sup> He also discussed the celibacy of clergy, the Last Judgement, the status of the Paraclete, and relation of Quran to the Gospel.<sup>19</sup> He further questioned him on contents of the sacred books, meaning of certain sacred pictures, the significance of Noah's Ark and tenets of Armenian and Nestorian Christians.<sup>20</sup>

Akbar, however, reportedly told Father Pereira, that he found the doctrines of Trinity and Incarnation to be stumbling blocks and if he could accept these, he would be ready to embrace Christianity.<sup>21</sup>

He also held discussions with them in his private quarters, and they also accompanied him on military and hunting expeditions.<sup>22</sup> Abul Fazl refers to the year 1579-80 as the one when much agitation was caused by

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<sup>15</sup> Aquaviva to Vicente, Fatehpur Sikri, 24 July 1582, in John Correia-Afonso, *Jesuit Letters and Indian History*, Bombay, 1980, p.110.

<sup>16</sup> Maclagan, E. *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, p.30.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, p.30.

<sup>18</sup> Monserrate, Commentarius, Mem. A.S.B, III, 1914, fol.68 (a), cf. Maclagan, E. *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, p.35.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, fol.71(b)-76(a).

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, fol.77(a)-78(b).

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, fol.31 a, cf. Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, p.33.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, p.51.

the Jesuit mission.<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately, our sources do not indicate any tangible consequences of this curiosity regarding Christianity during the time of Akbar and Jahangir. References to Christian practices or beliefs remain casual or incidental. In his book on ethics, Badauni mentions Christian books on ethics, but gives no title.<sup>24</sup>

In any case, the first Jesuit mission ignited some interest at the court in the Bible. It was obvious that by now there were no Arabic or Persian versions of the Gospel available. Apart from having religious discussions with them, Akbar also tried to acquire the Christian religious texts. A copy of the letter which accompanied the proposed embassy to Phillip II, the King of Spain in April 1582 (still extant in the in the first 'daftar' of the *Insha-i- Abu'l Fazl*) reads thus: 'our language being different from yours, we hope that you will rejoice us by sending to these parts a man able to represent to us these sublime objects of research in an intelligible manner. It has been brought to our notice that the revealed books, such as the Bible, the Gospels (*injl*) and the Psalms of David (*zabur*), Book of Moses(*taurat*) should these books which are profitable to all, whether translated into Arabic or Persian, as he had heard or not, be procurable in your country, send them.'<sup>25</sup> That he had a keen desire to have a direct access to the 'revealed books' is also testified by the fact that every embassy sent to Goa carried a royal letter with a request to send the abovementioned books along with a translator.<sup>26</sup> Although in 1580, Fathers presented him all volumes of Royal Bible in four languages,<sup>27</sup> he insisted on getting a translation in Arabic or Persian, (None of his scholars could read any of the four languages-Hebrew,

<sup>23</sup> Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, vol.iii, p.272. Also see E. Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mughal*, London, 1932, p.34.

<sup>24</sup> *Nijat'ur Rashid*, ed. S. Moinul Haq, Lahore, 1972, pp. 21-2.

<sup>25</sup> *Maktubat-i-Allami (Insha'-i-Abul Fazl)* DAFTAR I, tr. Mansura Haider, Delhi, 1998, p.10.

<sup>26</sup> Abul Fazl, *Insha-i-Abul Fazl*, Lucknow, 1270, pp.37-9.

<sup>27</sup> C.H.Payne, *Akbar and the Jesuits*, p.19.

Chaldean, Greek, and Latin, in which it was written and therefore constantly requested Fathers to provide him with translations in Persian of the Christian *Injil* (gospel)<sup>28</sup> the reason he charged Abu'l Fazl with translating the gospel into Persian.<sup>29</sup> During Second Jesuit mission, which arrived in April 1590 under Padre Firmilium (Leo Grimon?) from Goa. Akbar put some people to be instructed by him in order that the translation of the Greek books might be carried out.<sup>30</sup> The second Mission, however, ended abruptly. In 1595 Father Jerome Xavier, who came with the Third Jesuit mission (along with Father Emmanuel Pinheiro and Brother Benedict De Goes in 1594,<sup>31</sup> was commissioned by Akbar to translate the life of Christ based on the gospel, into Persian from a work in Portuguese, in collaboration with Maulana Abd-us-Sattar bin Qasim Lahori. This work was titled '*Dastan-i-Masih*' or '*Mirat-ul-Quds*.' It was prepared in 1602.<sup>32</sup> It has four parts (*Babs*)-1) Nativity and the Infancy of Christ, 2) His Miracles and Teaching, 3) His Death and Suffering, 4) His Resurrection and Ascension.<sup>33</sup> The complete Persian manuscript of the four gospels which was finally ready for presentation to Emperor Jahangir in 1609 is not extant, and the Royal Polyglot Bible was

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<sup>28</sup> Aquaviva to Vicente, Fatehpur Sikri, 24 July 1582, in Correia-Afonso, Letters, p.68.

<sup>29</sup> Badauni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, vol.ii, p.260.

<sup>30</sup> MacLagan, E. *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, p.46.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, p.50.

<sup>32</sup> *Mirat-al Quds* (Mirror of Holiness), Bodl. Pers. Ms. Fraser 256, ff.199b-200a. cf. Gulfishan Khan, *Indian Muslim Perception of the West during the Eighteenth Century*, p.146. For the description of the work, see H.Blochmann, *Note on the Persian MS. titled Mirat al Quds, A Life of Christ compiled at the request of the Emperor Akbar by Jerome Xavier*, Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, I, vii, pt.i (1888), pp.33-9, and A.Rogers, '*The Holy Mirror or the Gospel according to Father Jerome Xavier*,' Asiatic Quarterly Review, X, July-October (1890) pp.184-200. One of its manuscripts is in Lahore, dated 1602, bears seal of Akbar, and has 11 pictures; one (incomplete) copy is in Oriental Library, Patna, and two copies are in British Museum, London.

<sup>33</sup> MacLagan, E. *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, p.204.

later returned into Catholic hands. Akbar also asked Father Jerome Xavier to write on the life of twelve apostles in Persian. (This work however, could not be completed during Akbar's period and was presented in its final form to Jahangir in 1607, by the Fathers at Lahore and is said to have been appreciated by him).<sup>34</sup> Abd al Sattar also wrote a work called *Ain-i Haqq numa*. This treatise was in the form of a dialogue between a padre and a philosopher who he purports to have met at court, while a *mulla* intervenes. This was in five parts-1) Necessity for a Divine law, 2) What Christ teaches regarding God and proofs of it being confirmable to wisdom, 3) Divinity of Jesus Christ, our Lord, 4) Commandments of the Gospel and their contrast with those of the Muhammad, and, 5) the strength imparted by the Christian faith and its superiority to other religions. He later wrote an abridgement titled *Muntakhab-i-Ain-i Haqq numa*.<sup>35</sup> Akbar also asked Father Xavier to write on the lives of Apostles. Xavier accordingly wrote *Dastan-i-Ahwal-i-Hawariya* (lit. lives of the Apostles). The Apostles whose lives were covered were Ss. Thomas, James the Less, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Simond, Jude and Matthias. In 1604, a Florentine traveler, Gambetta Vachiete, also presented a Persian translation of the Psalms to Akbar.<sup>36</sup>

However, Akbar's enthusiasm for Persian translations of the Christian texts had no influence on the Mughal ruling elite, whose ideas and perception of Christianity hardly changed. The arguments in the Jesuit fathers discussions with the *ulema* were based on scriptures, and even when the *ulema* were presented with portion of the Gospels translated into Persian, they questioned their scriptures, which 'the Koran

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<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, pp.209-11.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*, p.208.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, pp.211-12.

says are spurious.<sup>37</sup> And it is logical to conclude that the ruling elite held more or less the same view as that of *ulema*. Besides, Akbar's zeal for translations was certainly not carried further with the same vigour even by his successors.

The Fathers at Lahore presented to Jahangir a book on the life of twelve apostles in 1607 and in 1610. Father Jerome Xavier also wrote *Ain-i-Haqqnuma* for Jahangir. (It was written in Portuguese with the title *Fuente de Vida*, after which various translations and abridgements were made in Persian, the most significant being the *A'ina-i-haqqnuma* (the truth reflecting mirror). This imaginary discourse set at the Mughal court was constructed by Jerome Xavier on the basis of several years' residence in the Mughal Court in order to show in systematic fashion, what he saw as the 'truth of Christianity and the falsehood of Islam'. The outcome of the role-play of the three disputants, a 'Father,' a 'philosopher' and a '*mullah*' is of course, contrived in favour of Christianity. Xavier himself speaks through the mouth of the Father and the '*mullah*' perhaps represents the Muslim leaders with whom Xavier held frequent intercourse.<sup>38</sup>

In his reign, another work on Christianity named *Subh-i-Sadiq*, was written by Sadiq Isfahani, which was a biography of Jesus Christ, completed in 1609 at his court. It described the life of Mary, the birth and life of Christ, his miracles, ascension to heaven as well as the lives of the Apostles and their attempts to spread the faith in different parts of the world.<sup>39</sup> An account of the life of Jesus Christ was also written during

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<sup>37</sup> Monserrate to Vincente, Fatehpur Sikri, 6<sup>th</sup> August, 1580, in Correia-Afonso, *Letters*, p.73.

<sup>38</sup> For an abridgement in English of Xavier's *A'ina-i-haqqnuma*, see Samuel Lee, *Controversial Tracts on Christianity and Mohammadanism* by the B.D. Henry Martyn, (Cambridge, 1824).

<sup>39</sup> Sadiq Isfahani, *Subh-i-Sadiq*, Bodl. Pers. MS. Ousley 292, ff. 53b-62b. cf. Gulfishan Khan, *Indian Muslim Perception of the West during the Eighteenth Century*, p.168 n.

Aurangzeb's reign by Shaikh Muhammad Baqa.<sup>40</sup> One of his brothers, Dara Shikoh, also maintained some relations with Christians at a personal level and while he held religious discussions with Hindus, Jesuit priests, *mullahs* etc., he took delight in 'talking to the Jesuits and making them dispute with Muslim priests.'<sup>41</sup>

Akbar's attitude towards the Christian Fathers was quite respectful and was in keeping with his policy of "absolute peace" or *sulh-i kul*. Father Monserrate noted that Akbar gave them entrance even to the inner courtyard of the palace, where only the most distinguished nobles had the right to entrance; he sent them food from his own table-a mark of distinction which he is said never to have conferred upon anyone before, he visited one of the Fathers when he was ill, and greeted him in Portuguese as a sign of respect.<sup>42</sup> He is even said to have been considerably influenced by the Christian philosophers at that time<sup>43</sup> and it may be due to this influence that he allowed certain Christian rituals to be publicly practiced. Badauni lamented that heresy became common as 'beating the gong after the manner of Christians and exhibition of the form of one person of the trinity, and of *cunabula*, which is the way of keeping festival and other such childish games became of daily occurrence.'<sup>44</sup>

Observation, or hearsay, about modes of religious worship, symbols and taboos also influenced the pattern of questioning on both sides. In India the long residence of the Jesuit missionaries within the palace enclosure, when non- Christians were permitted by Akbar to

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<sup>40</sup> *Mir'at al-Alam*, Bodl. Pers. Ms. Elliot 242, ff.18b-19b. cf. Gulfishan Khan, *Indian Muslim Perception of the West during the Eighteenth Century*, p.168 n.

<sup>41</sup> Manucci, Niccolao *Storia Do Mogor, 1656-1712*, p.214-15.

<sup>42</sup> Monserrate, Fr. A. *Commentary on his Journey to the Court of Akbar*, p.64.

<sup>43</sup> Abu'l Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Bib.Ind., vol.iii, p.398.

<sup>44</sup> Badauni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, vol.ii, p.364.

attend Church services and even to observe the sacraments, meant that the liturgical forms of worship, and especially the various festivals of the Christian calendar were open to Christian observation. Akbar showed great interest in Christian festivals, visited the Jesuit chapel on special occasions such as a marriage ceremony, and at Christmas to see the crib.<sup>45</sup> Akbar had even celebrated the day of Assumption of the Virgin in 1590, 'by bringing out and paying respect to his picture of Our Lady.'<sup>46</sup>

It was through the Jesuit priests that Akbar came to know about Pope as being the representative of all Christians.<sup>47</sup> Badauni also mentions that the monks from Europe were called *Padris*, with an infallible head called Pope.<sup>48</sup> It is infact alleged that when Akbar got the *mahzar* issued by the *Ulama*, he was not oblivious of the position of Pope. Badauni wrote: 'there came experienced theologians from Europe (*Afranja*), whom they call 'Padre.' Their absolute legislator (*mujtahid-i-kamil*), who can alter all decrees in view of circumstances of the time, and kings too cannot defy his authority, is called the Pope. The *shast* resembled the crucifix.'<sup>49</sup>

As a friendly gesture towards the Fathers, he is said to have expressed his wish to them that Christians should live and preach freely in his Empire.<sup>50</sup> He even permitted his two nephews to embrace Christianity under their supervision and put Prince Murad under Father Monserrate to learn Portuguese from them.<sup>51</sup>

At the same time he let them construct Churches in his Empire e.g. at Agra, Fatehpur Sikri and Lahore- the reason why the Christian

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<sup>45</sup> Monserrate, Fr. A. *Commentary on his Journey to the Court of Akbar*, p.59.

<sup>46</sup> E. Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, p.48.

<sup>47</sup> Monserrate, Fr. A. *Commentary on his Journey to the Court of Akbar*, p.172.

<sup>48</sup> Badauni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, vol.iii, p.256.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*, p.260.

<sup>50</sup> Fr. A. Monserrate, *Commentary on his Journey to the Court of Akbar*, p.47.

<sup>51</sup> Badauni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, vol.ii, p.256.

community grew in Agra and Lahore,<sup>52</sup> although he never issued a general order to that intent.<sup>53</sup> He is reported to have issued a *farman* permitting the construction of churches in Cambay.<sup>54</sup> Infact, when the Agra church, whose construction was permitted to Jesuits, was completed, Akbar himself participated in its inauguration and performed service according to the Christian practice. He also granted annual maintenance allowance to it. This allowance was continued by Jahangir.<sup>55</sup> He is also said to have provided funds to the Church at Lahore, for its upkeep and expressed his wish to the Fathers to see it.<sup>56</sup> The Jesuit Fathers were given considerable importance during Jahangir's reign also. He gave them a house and a church at Lahore<sup>57</sup> and also extended payment of pension to Fathers at Lahore. On another occasion, he ordered a monthly allowance of 30 rupees to the Church.<sup>58</sup> He is called by Joseph Salbank, in a letter to East India Company, as the one who, 'doth much honour the memory of our blessed Lord, whom he calleth Hazerat Esa, therefore the Christains live with more liberty and security in the country than they do (in any?) Mahometan King's dominions.'<sup>59</sup> Empress Nur Jahan is also reported to have visited a church at Lahore.<sup>60</sup> As a gesture of

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<sup>52</sup> C.H. Payne, *Jahangir and the Jesuits*, p.xvii-xviii.

<sup>53</sup> In 1602, when the Fathers at Lahore under Father Francis Corsi requested Akbar to grant them 'letters-patent' in the form of an edict, signed by himself, proclaiming his goodwill towards Church and Christians and let his subjects free to convert to Christianity without any hindrance, he only gave his verbal assurance and did not sign any such edict, (C.H.Payne, *Akbar and the Jesuits*, p.154-56).

<sup>54</sup> Rev Father Felix, '*Mughal Farmans, Parwanahs and Sanads issued in favour of the Jesuit Missionaries*, Journal of the Punjab Historical Society, Special Number, vol.v, No.1, Calcutta, 1916.

<sup>55</sup> F.Bernier, *Travels in the Mughal Empire, 1656-68*.

<sup>56</sup> C.H. Payne, *Jahangir and the Jesuits*, p.30.

<sup>57</sup> Monserrate, Fr. A. *Commentary on his Journey to the Court of Akbar*, p.69.

<sup>58</sup> C.H. Payne, *Jahangir and the Jesuits*, p.35.

<sup>59</sup> *Letters Received*, vol.vi, pp.183,188.

<sup>60</sup> Maclagan, E. *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, (London, 1932). n.90.



friendliness Jahangir handed over many youths to Father Francisco Corsi for education as also his deceased brother's sons-Tahmiras, Baysinghar and Hoshang (son of Daniyal) for education in Christianity. All of them were baptized at Agra.<sup>61</sup> These princes however, renounced their new religion later on.<sup>62</sup> In the maintenance of relations with the Portuguese one of his nobles, Muqarrab Khan, a *mansabdar* of high rank during Jahangir's reign, played an important role. In 1607, he was sent as an ambassador to the Viceroy of Goa where he displayed considerable appreciation for Christianity.<sup>63</sup> He tried to win over the Jesuits by expressing his love for their faith—he is alleged to have shown reverence to a painting of Jesus and Mary at Surat<sup>64</sup> 'and so deeply was he impressed, that he said that it would be better not to have lived at all than to have lived without seeing so marvellous a work.'<sup>65</sup> At Patna Muqarrab Khan is reported to have helped construct some Jesuit churches and to have kept a priest, maintaining his links with the Portuguese and so enriching himself.<sup>66</sup> However, Maclagan quotes Father Simon Figueredo's letter of 20 December 1620, where the Father says that Muqarrab Khan kept a priest 'with no other object than that of attracting Portuguese trade, from which he could enrich himself.'<sup>67</sup>

He also allowed the Jesuit Fathers, Pinheiro, to treat his adopted son-later known as *Masih-i-Kairanwi*- with Christian relics, and even

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<sup>61</sup> W. Hawkins, *Early Travels in India 1583-1619*, London, 1921, P.116. Also see William Foster (ed.), *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, London, 1926, P.275-6.

<sup>62</sup> Roe held that these three Mughal princes had been baptized seemingly for diplomatic reasons. William Foster (ed.), *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.376.

<sup>63</sup> C.H.Payne, *Jahangir and the Jesuits*, op.cit., Part 1, p.44.

<sup>64</sup> E. Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, London, 1932, p. 78.

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*, p. 79.

<sup>66</sup> E. Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Grand Mogul*, pp. 78-9.

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*, p.78.

helped construct some churches there.<sup>68</sup> In 1612, he was again sent as an ambassador to the Viceroy of Goa, where he allegedly embraced Catholicism and received the name 'John.'<sup>69</sup> Maclagan corroborates this conversion and refers to a letter written by Muqarrab Khan on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1615 wherein the name 'Jesu' was superscribed.<sup>70</sup> Nicholas Withington, in one of his despatches of 17 November 1613, says that:

After this Mocrobacann proceeded on his journey for Goa, where (as the *Portingals* say and swear) he according to his desire was christened, saying he felt his conscience very light and jocund after his baptism."<sup>71</sup> He was, however probably an imperfect Christian and therefore, treated with some circumspection by the authorities at Goa.<sup>72</sup>

After the death of Father Jerome Xavier in June, 1617, however, Jesuits were not provided patronage on grand scale, but were still favoured.<sup>73</sup>

Christianity, as preached by the Jesuit fathers from Portugal, managed to sustain interest of the Mughal court and nobility till around 1630, after which it started to wane, the reasons being the end of Portuguese domination of the high seas due to which not only their economic motives but also their religious mission hitherto carried forth by the Jesuit fathers with much vigour and passion, received a serious setback from which it never recovered. The Jesuit fathers had helped the Mughal court in maintaining cordial relations with the Portuguese. They often accompanied embassies sent to and from Goa and often helped the Mughal Kings in acquiring Christian texts and paintings. Once the Portuguese power started declining, their role as cultural ambassadors slowly diminished and the patronage which had been extended to them

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<sup>68</sup> *ibid.*, p.78-79.

<sup>69</sup> *Letter Received*, vol.iii, p.298n.

<sup>70</sup> E. Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Grand Mogul*, p.78

<sup>71</sup> *Purchas His Pilgrims*, vol.iii, pp. 184-5, also pp. 265-6.

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*, p.78.

<sup>73</sup> Maclagan, E. *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, p.90.

earlier was rolled back by the Mughal emperors. Besides, neither Akbar, nor Jahangir fulfilled the Jesuit hope of their conversion which, they hoped, would lead to mass conversions of his subjects!

The Jesuit churches at Agra which had been built with Akbar's permission and had received grants from both Akbar and Jahangir were refused any further renewal of financial assistance by Shahjahan. In 1635, he also destroyed their churches at Agra and Lahore. Infact, he ordered the Agra church to be burnt.<sup>74</sup> The Portuguese established at Hughli under the auspices of Jahangir, later Shahjahan was offended by the protection they were giving to the depredators of Aracan and attacked them. It was to punish them that he ordered the large and handsome church at Agra, together with one at Lahore, which had been erected during the time Jahangir, to be demolished.<sup>75</sup> He also prohibited them from proselytizing among Muslims.<sup>76</sup> Another Jesuit Mission arrived at Shahjahan's Court under Father Antonio Ceschi, Father Antonio Botelho, and Father Henry Roth.<sup>77</sup> However, Shahjahan had no personal contact with them. There was some thawing of relations in the reign of Aurangzeb. His brother Dara displayed some interest in Catholic Christianity.<sup>78</sup> Even the grants of property made to Jesuits by Jahangir were duly confirmed.<sup>79</sup> No interference was done in their mode of worship by Aurangzeb. This display of friendliness did not last long and even when he sent for a Persian translation of the Gospels, he was deterred by advisors that the book had been tampered by *Farangi* Padres, and therefore he did not read it.<sup>80</sup> Remarks against the Prophet Muhammad were not tolerated. Even

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<sup>74</sup> Nicolao Manucci, *Storia Do Mogor, 1655-1712*, vol.iii, London, p.169; F. Bernier, *Travels in Mughal Empire*, p.286.

<sup>75</sup> Bernier, *Travels in Mughal Empire*, p.176.

<sup>76</sup> Maclagan, E. *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, p.105.

<sup>77</sup> *ibid.*, p.107.

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*, p.116.

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*, p.121.

<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*, p.121.

celebration of Mass became difficult.<sup>81</sup> Allowances to the non-muslims were stopped and *Jazia* was reimposed by him in 1679 at the rate of 3 ½ rs. Per head p.a. At the plea of Fathers against this tax, only the Christians of Agra were exempted from it.<sup>82</sup>

The writings of contemporary thinkers provide a useful insight on the nature and extent of the interactions between the Muslims and the Christians in the period. One such writer is Shah Waliullah who critically analyzed the beliefs of Christianity. To start with, he disputed the New Testament and interpreted it in a Quranic way. While the New Testament considered Jesus Christ as a part, an 'incarnation' of God, he disputed the fact that Jesus was the 'son' of God saying that in the ancient Semetic languages, the word 'son' was interchangeable with 'beloved' or 'favourite' of God, which was in fact the true meaning of the word.<sup>83</sup> Earlier, similar remarks were made by Alberuni who said that 'By *the son* [of God] they (the Christians) understand most especially Jesus, but apply it also to others besides him,<sup>84</sup> thereby implicitly disregarding Jesus' status as an 'incarnation' of God and reaffirming the Quranic view that he was only the 'messenger' of God. Even in the *Ibadat Khana* debates, Muslim disputants drew information about Christianity from Quran, which was relied on as the authorities source on Christianity even when the Bible was accessible. One of the Fathers reported crudely, but pointedly, 'because they do not have the Bible nor can read it.'<sup>85</sup> The Jesuits expounded on the 'second Person' as the 'word', their reasoning exemplified in Father Aquaviva's claim to Akbar that, in calling Christ

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<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*, p.122.

<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*, p.123.

<sup>83</sup> Shah Waliullah, *Al Fawz al-Kabir fi usul-i tafsir*, Karachi, 1383/1963-64, pp.23-32. cf. S.A.A. Rizvi, *Religious and intellectual History of the Muslims in Akbar's Reign*, p.238-40.

<sup>84</sup> *Alberuni's India*, tr. E.C. Sachau, London, 1910, i, p.38.

<sup>85</sup> Aquaviva to Father Everard Mercurian, Fatehpur Sikri, 18 July 1580, in Correia-Afonso, *Letters*, p.58.

‘Calametollah’, Alcoranus so far agrees with the first words of the Gospel, ‘In the beginning was the word.’<sup>86</sup>

At a very early stage in the historical encounter Christian apologists seemed to accommodate to what they saw as Muslim misunderstanding of the physical sonship of Christ by exposition of the second person of the trinity in ‘word of God’ rather than ‘son of God’ terminology, thus placing the ‘word’ (*logos*) of the first chapter of John’s Gospel in the context of the Quranic *Kalimat* (word).

Emperor Jahangir may have broken the pattern briefly in the early seventeenth century, by seeming to come to the Jesuits’ rescue in positing to his ‘*ulema*’ metaphorical acceptance of Christ’s divinity and sonship, but the Emperor’s motive for this probably merely reflected his malicious pleasure in seeing his own ‘*ulema*’ discomfited by his apparent acceptance of the Christian heresy.<sup>87</sup>

Trinity refers to the three different ways in which God works—an idea which clashes with the strict monotheism of Islam, and therefore unacceptable. Another fundamental concept of Christianity which he disputed was crucifixion,<sup>88</sup> which is in fact a basic tenet on which many other beliefs are based e.g. the original sin, the consequent sinful nature of mankind which needs repentance, and forgiveness of sins which would lead to reconciliation of man with God. It is believed that Jesus forgave every sinner on his own and declared that he was dying for the forgiveness of ‘their’ sins; and lastly resurrection on the third day of his death. The Quran was also the starting point for discussion of the nature

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<sup>86</sup> Monserrate, Fr. A. *Commentary on his Journey to the Court of Akbar*, p.180.

<sup>87</sup> Arnulf Camps, *Jerome Xavier S.J. and the Muslims of the Mughal Empire: Controversial Works and Missionary Activity* (Schoneck-Beckenrad, 1957), p.214.

<sup>88</sup> Shah Waliullah, *Al Fawz al-Kabir fi usul-i tafsir*, Karachi, 1383/1963-64, pp.23-32. cf. S.A.A. Rizvi, *Religious and intellectual History of the Muslims in Akbar’s Reign*, p.238-40.

and significance of Christ's death. Shah Waliullah reiterated the Quranic view that being a messiah, Jesus could not have suffered death and that he had ascended to the heaven alive before crucifixion. Therefore, he denounced crucifixion also.<sup>89</sup>

The irreconcilable clash between Islamic notions of *tauhid* (divine unity) and Christian understandings both of *taslis* (trinity) and of the Incarnation and divinity of Christ initially determined the focus of debates between the ulema and the Christian missionaries. Shah Waliullah also firmly denounced the concept of 'trinity'.<sup>90</sup>

Christians on the other hand, had always regarded Muhammad as a 'false prophet' and the preacher of a 'heresy,' attacked both his status and his character.<sup>91</sup> As Badauni commented, 'these accursed people brought in a description of *Dajjal* (Anti-Christ) and applied his attributes to our Prophet, peace be on him, the very opposite of all *Dajjals*.'<sup>92</sup>

Aquaviva, who was the first to make the accusation, reported his Superior-General that 'we, in the presence of the king and all his people have said that Muhammad was anti-Christ,'<sup>93</sup> Since these details come to us almost from the Jesuit accounts, one cannot rule out an element of

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<sup>89</sup> *ibid.*; Alberuni considered Trinity to be not inconsistent with monotheism, for he says that the Christians 'distinguish' between the Three Persons (the Trinity) and give them separate names, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, but unite them into one substance, *Alberuni's India*, tr. E.C. Sachau, London, 1910, i, p.94.

<sup>90</sup> Shah Waliullah, *Al Fawz al-Kabir fi usul-i tafsir*, Karachi, 1383/1963-64, pp.23-32. cf. S.A.A. Rizvi, *Religious and intellectual History of the Muslims in Akbar's Reign*, p.238-40.

<sup>91</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> Abdul Qadir Badauni, *Muntakhab-ut Tawarikh*, Bib. Ind. n, p. 260.

<sup>93</sup> Aquaviva to Mercurian, Fatehpur Sikri, 18<sup>th</sup> July, 1580, in Correia-Afonso, *Letters*, p.61.

exaggeration and hyperbole. Even so, they do give us some idea of the tolerance with which Jesuit beliefs were received at Akbar's court.<sup>94</sup>

Although Akbar accepted with much delight a book of Father Xavier's composition describing the life, miracles, and doctrine of Christ but he refused to acknowledge the divinity of Christ and ascribed his miracles to his skill as a physician.<sup>95</sup> While believing that the Christian beliefs were misinterpretations of the 'actual' texts or events, Shah Waliullah believed that the Christians mistook the allegorical references to Christ as being his 'miracles.' He held that Bible was an 'unauthentic' text full of interpolations and misinterpretations.<sup>96</sup> (The Gospel texts, the Quran itself had claimed, had suffered from unauthorized deletions and insertions; and this claim, of course, created a fundamental point of disagreement between the Muslims, on the one hand, and the Jews and Christians on the other).

Regarding the birth of Jesus however, he believed that Jesus was indeed the son of Virgin Mary, conceived of the faithful spirit Gabriel at a divine command.<sup>97</sup>

Two interrelated aspects of the Incarnation which always gave rise to perplexed questions from Muslims, were the relation of Mary to the Godhead, and the circumstances of Christ's physical birth. At a very early stage the notion that Mary was one of the three persons of the trinity had been incorporated into the Muslim image of Christianity to the displacement of the 'Holy Spirit' of the Christian trinity. Christian apologists, the Jesuits among them, always denied that Mary was

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<sup>94</sup> Akbar is even reported to have asked them 'to expound the truth to me, and not be afraid of exposing the crimes of Muhammad.' Monserrate, Fr. A. *Commentary on his Journey to the Court of Akbar*, p.134.

<sup>95</sup> E. Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, p.62.

<sup>96</sup> Shah Waliullah, *Al Fawz al-Kabir fi usul-i tafsir*, Karachi, 1383/1963-64, pp.23-32. cf. S.A.A. Rizvi, *Religious and intellectual History of the Muslims in Akbar's Reign*, p.238-40.

<sup>97</sup> *ibid.*

‘worshipped’, but her visual representation in many of the ‘Virgin and Child’ paintings displayed at the Mughal Court probably only reinforced the Mughal assumption (On one occasion in 1582 Monserrate recounted with approbation a report ‘amongst the Mussalmans that king had become a worshipper of the Virgin Mary, the mother of God,’ a tendency encouraged by the placing of a beautiful picture of the Virgin on his balcony.<sup>98</sup> Among the more learned Muslims the role of Mary in the incarnation process remained a focus of debate, for although the Quran might seem to support the Christian teaching on the ‘virgin birth’, scholarly exegesis differed on whether Christ, if conceived miraculously, had nevertheless been born in the usual human manner.

Another work belonging to the mid seventeenth century is *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* by Mulla Mubad Shah,<sup>99</sup> a Zoroastrian, who served the information about Roman Catholicism from a French priest (or Padre Francis, a Portuguese priest) whom he met at Surat, without a critical analysis. This account is divided into three sections-(i) birth of Jesus Christ, (ii) beliefs of Christians, and, (iii) practices of Christians. In the first section he dates the birth of Christ as three thousand, nine hundred and ninety-nine years since the beginning of creation. His virgin birth had been predicted by Isaih, the prophet (Father of David). Jesus also announced that he was the son of God who sits at the right hand side of God (i.e. part of trinity).<sup>100</sup> Jesus was considered blasphemous and underwent suffering and crucifixion, to atone for the sins of mankind, as was predicted by Isiah. The second chapter (*nazar*) contains articles of

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<sup>98</sup> Monserrate, Fr. A. *Commentary on his Journey to the Court of Akbar*, p.176.

<sup>99</sup> For a discussion on the name and identity of the author of *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, see M. Athar Ali, *Pursuing an Elusive Seeker of Universal Truth-the Identity and Environment of the Author of Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, JRAS, vol.9, Part 3, November, 1999, CUP, London.

<sup>100</sup> *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*, 1653-1656, ed. Nazar Ashraf, Calcutta, 1809, p.250-1.



faith on the divine attributes of God as well as the human nature of Jesus. It outlines belief in the virgin birth of Christ, his crucifixion, incarnation, resurrection, ascension to heaven and his anticipated arrival on the judgement day as well as belief in trinity.<sup>101</sup> The third chapter deals with the rituals and practices of Christian community as Sunday sermons, confession, rituals of marriage etc. The author further wrote that the successor to Lord Christ was called 'Pope' and also that the New Testament of Bible is regarded as the word of God.<sup>102</sup>

What is noticeable here is that although a vague notion of the differences that had divided the Christians world was known to the scholars in Mughal India, the details of the schism in the Papal world were not known. Like most other works in Mughal India, the Dabistan treats the Christians as a homogenous community of believers. Alberuni also had access to the text of the Old Testament, for he refers to both the Jewish and Christ' Testaments being in Hebrew and Syriac. Similarly, he cites 'the Second Book of Kings', about the loss of David's son borne by Uriah's wife and God's promise of another son to him whom he would 'adopt as his own son'. Of the Christian gospel, Alberuni shows equal if not greater grasp.<sup>103</sup> Elsewhere he shows familiarity with the ranks of the Church, speaking of the bishops, metropolitans, *catholici* and patriarchs, and of the lower clergy, namely the presbyter and deacon.<sup>104</sup> Presumably, he knew more of the Eastern than of the Roman Church, for he never mentions the Pope. Unfortunately, our sources do not indicate any tangible consequences of this curiosity regarding Christianity during the time of Akbar and Jahangir. References to Christian practices or beliefs remain casual or incidental. In his book on ethics, Badauni mentions

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<sup>101</sup> *ibid.*, pp.252-53.

<sup>102</sup> *ibid.* pp.254-56.

<sup>103</sup> *Alberuni's India*, tr. E.C. Sachau, London, 1910, vol. i, p. 38.

<sup>104</sup> *ibid.*, p.15.

Christian books on ethics, but gives no title; <sup>105</sup> elsewhere, he recalls from his personal knowledge that Christians and Jews like the Hindus, not only regard music as permissible, but consider it a part of worship, <sup>106</sup> is a little more specific evidence of actual observation of Christian (and Jewish?) practices, but it hardly denotes penetration. Jahangir seems to have an idea of their different modes of worship when (while praising Akbar's religious policy) he said, 'Sunnis and Shias met in one mosque and franks and Jews in one church, and observed their own forms of worship.' <sup>107</sup> Ferishta, writing in the first decade of the seventeenth century, wrote that the English are different from Portuguese as they consider Jesus Christ to be a servant or envoy of God, and that God is one, without a wife or a son. <sup>108</sup>

Since the Mughals first came into contact with Portuguese, it was their version of Christianity which they first encountered. In the latter half of the century, Khafi Khan, writing in the mid-eighteenth century, wrote that, 'unlike a Hindu temple, their (Portuguese') place of worship was very conspicuous, for tapers of camphor were kept burning there in the daytime. They had set up figures of the Lord Jesus and Mary and other figures in wood, paint and wax, with great gaudiness, but in the churches of English who were also Christians, there are no figures set up as idols.' <sup>109</sup> Khafi Khan also mentioned that in their commercial settlement at Hughli in Bengal, they (Portuguese) also built a place of worship called church (*kalisa*). <sup>110</sup>

<sup>105</sup> *Nijat'ur Rashid*, ed. S. Moinul Haq, Lahore, 1972, pp. 21-2.

<sup>106</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 210-11.

<sup>107</sup> *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, part.1, p.37.

<sup>108</sup> Muhammad Hindushah Astarbadi Ferishta, *Tarikh-i-Farishta* (or *Gulshan-i-Ibrahimi*), 2 vols. (Lucknow, 1865), p.373.

<sup>109</sup> Khan, Khafi *Muntakhab ul Lubab*, (Calcutta, 1870), vii, p.212.

<sup>110</sup> Badauni, *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*, tr. Elliot and Dowson, P.211, vol.i, p.468.

The treatment of Christianity in Mughal paintings contributes to a better understanding of how kings and nobility perceived Christianity. The source of Mughal art's introduction with Christianity primarily were the European prints and paintings with which the Mughal artists were familiar even before Akbar had any formal encounter with the Portuguese. (When Father Monserrate arrived from Goa with the first Jesuit mission, he noticed that the European pictures of Christ and Mary were already there).<sup>111</sup> Akbar's innovative aesthetic sense led him to experiment with Christian religious themes, based on the gifts made to him by the Jesuits. In 1580, the first Jesuit missionaries presented him an eight volume Polyglot Bible with several pictures. In 1580, Akbar was presented portraits of 'Saviour of the World' by the Father and in 1598, Father Xavier presented pictures of Christ and Ignatius Loyola to Akbar.<sup>112</sup> Again in 1601, Father Xavier and Pinheiro presented to Akbar picture of Virgin drawn in ink.<sup>113</sup> A large number of small engravings and illustrated frontispieces were also introduced from Europe during the late sixteenth century and the beginning of seventeenth century.<sup>114</sup> Besides these books, prints and engravings, silken and woolen tapestries worked with stones from the Old Testament were also brought here,<sup>115</sup> and therefore themes and stories of Christian mythology and parables were

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<sup>111</sup> Monserrate, Fr. A. *Commentary on his Journey to the Court of Akbar*, p.29.

<sup>112</sup> MacLagan, E. *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, p.226.

<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> S.P. Verma, *Humanism in the Mughal Painting*, Presidential Address, Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, 63<sup>rd</sup> session, Amritsar, 2002, p.213. see 'A copy of European Engravings,' signed by Nadira Banu, c. 1600-04, see fig.ii, p.136; and a folio from Gulshan Album, Gulistan Palace Library. Cf. A.K. Das, *Mughal Painting During Jahangir's Time*, Calcutta, 1998, see fig.iii, p.137.

<sup>115</sup> Francisco Palseart, '*Remonstrantie*', c.1626, tr. Moreland and Geyl, '*Jahangir's India*, Cambridge, 1925, p.25.

profusely worked upon such as that of Adam,<sup>116</sup> Noah,<sup>117</sup> Moses,<sup>118</sup> Sarah (wife of Abraham),<sup>119</sup> Daniel in the Lion's Den,<sup>120</sup> The Angel of Tobias,<sup>121</sup> Expulsion from Paradise,<sup>122</sup> Holy Family, Annunciation, Angels appearing to the Shepherds, Cleaning of the Temple of Bethlehem, Nativity of Christ,<sup>123</sup> Adoration, Presentation to the Temple,<sup>124</sup> The good Shepherd<sup>125</sup> etc. Themes from the life of Christ were painted with equal vigour, for example, 'The Entry into Jerusalem' (which is probably one of the '*Dastan-i-Masih*' manuscript, Mughal ca 1605, BM, 7-2405), Christ in the Wilderness, The Last Supper, Crucifixion, Lamentation, The Last Judgement, Resurrection<sup>126</sup> etc. The subject of crucifixion is not seen favourably by the Muslims, yet the topic was not altogether discarded by the Mughal painters and we do get some examples of it like Crucifixion, Descent from the Cross, Deposition of Cross,<sup>127</sup> (which Akbar specially got made by a Portuguese artist)<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Thomas Arnold, *Indian Miniatures, The Library of A. Chester Beatty*, ed. J.V.S Wilkinson, Pl.77.

<sup>117</sup> Sebastian Manrique, *Travels, 1629-43*, tr. C.E. Luard, assisted by Hosten, 2 vols, Hakluyt Society, London, 1927, vol.ii, p.207.

<sup>118</sup> *The Voyage of Nicholas Downton to the East Indies, 1614-15*, p.8.

<sup>119</sup> Victoria and Albert Museum, Clive Album. Cf. A.J. Qaiser, *Indian Response to European Technology and Culture*, p.90, Pl.122. Cf. A.J. Qaiser, *Indian Response to European Technology and Culture*, p.90.

<sup>120</sup> B.W. Robinson, *Islamic Painting and the Arts of the Book (The Keir Collection)*, Pl.122. Cf. A.J. Qaiser, *Indian Response to European Technology and Culture*, p.90.

<sup>121</sup> E. Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, p.254.

<sup>122</sup> M.C. Beach, *The Gulshan Album and its European Sources*, BBMFA, vol. xiii, No. 332, 1965, fig.12a. Cf. A.J. Qaiser, *Indian Response to European Technology and Culture*, p.90.

<sup>123</sup> 'Nativity of Christ,' Thomas Arnold, *Indian Miniatures, The Library of A. Chester Beatty*, ed. J.V.S Wilkinson, P.82, see fig.iv, p.138; Also 'Nativity of Christ' *Mughal and Deccani Paintings, From the Collection of the National Museum*, Dr. Daljeet, Delhi, 1999, see fig.v, p.139.

<sup>124</sup> E. Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, p.254.

<sup>125</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> *ibid.*

Christ holding a Cross (BLA(A), No.12)<sup>129</sup> We find another painting on crucifixion during Jahangir's reign.<sup>130</sup> Some other pictures of Christ related to his miracles e.g. Christ stilling the Storm, Widow's dead son regaining life, the Revival of the Daughter of Darius.<sup>131</sup> The portraits of Virgin Mary seem to have been very popular in the Mughal court.<sup>132</sup> Akbar is said to have received a beautiful picture of the Virgin presented to him by Fathers with greatest delight which had been brought from Rome.<sup>133</sup> In 1580, the Fathers gifted him another picture of holy virgin.<sup>134</sup> Father Xavier in a letter to the General of the Society asked for a large picture of the Holy Virgin or of the Nativity to be sent for Akbar and Prince Salim.<sup>135</sup> Akbar got made a painting of 'Madonna and the Child with Angels' (by a Portuguese painter), Madonna (by Balchand), Madonna and Child, The Virgin, Child and the Angel, Virgin and Child (by Manohar), The Virgin, Child and the Angel, by Mahabat (a painter of Jahangir).<sup>136</sup> Other paintings were Madonna by the Tree, Madonna on the Bed, Madonna with a Rose, Madonna on a Snake, Madonna on the Crescent, Madonna on the Rock, Madonna and Child, (one by Basawan and Other by Jamal Mohammad), Virgin and Child (Kesav),<sup>137</sup> Madonna Feeding Infant Jesus.<sup>138</sup> Paintings of Christian saints were also done to a

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<sup>128</sup> S.P.Verma, *Humanism in the Mughal Painting*, p.214.

<sup>129</sup> S.P.Verma, *Mughal Painters and their Work; a Bibliographical Survey and Comprehensive Catalogue*, Delhi, 1994, p.50.

<sup>130</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> Cf. (I.O.) Johnson, 16.1; 'The Good Shepherd;' V and A, p.132-1885 (25), A.J.Qaiser, *Indian Response*, p.90.

<sup>132</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> Monserrate, Fr. A. *Commentary on his Journey to the Court of Akbar*, pp.48-9, 58-9.

<sup>134</sup> C.H.Payne, *Jahangir and the Jesuits*, pp.19-20.

<sup>135</sup> E. Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, p.226.

<sup>136</sup> S.P. Verma, *Mughal Painters and Their Work*, pp.74, 93,195,213,241.

<sup>137</sup> Thomas Arnold, *Indian Miniatures, The Library of A. Chester Beatty*, ed. J.V.S. Wilkinson, p. 83, see fig.vi, p.140.

<sup>138</sup> S.P. Verma, *Mughal Painters and Their Work*, pp.74,195,205,212-13,256.

great extent, Kesavdas, a painter of Akbar's court, created some of the best works e.g. 'St. Matthews and the Angel (1587-88), based on an engraving by Philip Galle), St. Jerome (by Nadira Banu),<sup>139</sup> St. John, George, Martyrdom of St. Cecilia (a painting by Nini in Jahangir's period, Victoria and Albert Museum, London; also in Indian Museum, Calcutta, no.139-1921),<sup>140</sup> Magdalen, Margaret and Catherine, Tobias and the Angel, (signed on the mount by Husain, Musee Guimet, Paris,)<sup>141</sup> Virgin and Angel (c. 1605-08 A.D., no. 3619 H.A., unsigned, Central Museum Lahore),<sup>142</sup> there is another picture where a saint is shown reading a book and the cave where Christ was born is shown in the background.<sup>143</sup>

Jahangir, even as a prince, was particularly fond of collecting Christian pictures.<sup>144</sup> In 1608, Father Xavier noticed his collection having the pictures of Sardanapalus, the Circumcision, God the Father, Crucifixion, David kneeling before Nathan.<sup>145</sup> There is also a miniature by Abul Hasan, a painter of Jahangir, titled '*Jahangir holding the Picture of Madonna*,' c. A.D. 1620.<sup>146</sup> William Finch noticed pictures of Christ and the Virgin Mary on the walls of the retiring room in the Fort of Lahore.<sup>147</sup> Thevenot in his account, based on hearsay, also noted that while on one of the gates was the painting of crucifixion and on the other gate was the picture of the Virgin.<sup>148</sup> Jahangir's palaces at Agra carry many pictures of Christ, Mary and various saints and have been described

<sup>139</sup> *ibid.*, p.309. Gulshan (A), Gulistan Library, Tehran.

<sup>140</sup> A.K. Das, *Mughal Painting During Jahangir's Time*, p.68, see fig.vii, p.141.

<sup>141</sup> *ibid.*, p.76. See fig.viii, p.142.

<sup>142</sup> *ibid.*, p.75. See fig.ix, p.142.

<sup>143</sup> E. Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, p.255.

<sup>144</sup> S. P. Verma, *Humanism in the Mughal Painting*, p.217.

<sup>145</sup> E. Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, p.115n, 248.

<sup>146</sup> *Mughal and Deccani Paintings, From the Collection of the National Museum*, Dr. Daljeet, Delhi, 1999, opp. p.50. See fig.x, p.144.

<sup>147</sup> W. Foster, *Early Travels in India*, p.162-3.

<sup>148</sup> Jean de Thevenot, *The Indian Travels of Thevenot and Carver*, p.85

thus: "in the middle of the ceiling there was a painting of Christ our lord surrounded by angels; and on the walls were some small pictures of the saints including John the Baptist, St. Anthony, St. Bernadine of Sena, and some female saints."<sup>149</sup> There were figures on each side of the window. Above those on the right was a representation of Christ our lord with a globe of the world in His hand, and on the left was a picture of our Lady the Virgin, copied from a painting by St. Luke, and to the right and left of these were various saints in a posture of prayer. The window where the King sits, he had got painted on the flanks of the same wall life-size portraits of his two sons, above one of them is a representation on a smaller scale, of our Lord and a father of the company with a book in his hand and above the other, of our Lady the Virgin. On the vault of the *charola* (oriel) are pictures of St. Paul, St. Gregory and St. Ambrose.<sup>150</sup> In the interior of the palace the walls and the ceilings of the various halls are adorned with pictures illustrating the life of Christ, scenes from the Acts of Apostles copied from the Lives of Apostles which the Fathers had given him, and the stories of the Sisters Ana and Susana and many other saints.<sup>151</sup> As a prince and in the early years of his reign, Shahjahan did evince some interest in the European pictures,<sup>152</sup> but later on we hardly notice depiction of Christian themes to any considerable extent. However, one of his sons-Dara Shikoh, collected some engravings representing Virgin and Child during the flight to Egypt; 'St Catherine of Seina' dated 1685, and 'St. Margaret' in his album.<sup>153</sup>

Not only the kings, but some nobles also, particularly of Jahangir's period, showed considerable interest in European pictures based on

<sup>149</sup> C.H. Payne, *Jahangir and the Jesuits*, p.63.

<sup>150</sup> *ibid.*, p.64.

<sup>151</sup> *ibid.*, p.64-65.

<sup>152</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.226-7.

<sup>153</sup> Toby Falk and Mildred Archer, *Indian Miniatures in the India Office Library*, London, 1981, p.78.

Christian themes. It seems that they showed special inclination towards portraits based on Christ's life and Virgin Mary. In 1616, Roe presented Muqarrab Khan thirteen pictures of Christ and a set of twelve Apostles.<sup>154</sup> The same year, he presented Jamaluddin Hasan Inju a book containing forty-eight sheets of pictures illustrating the whole life of Christ.<sup>155</sup> Aziz Koka, a foster-brother of Akbar, also showed interest in Christian pictures and tried to acquire the picture of Madonna Del Popolo from the Jesuits.<sup>156</sup> Mirza Beg, Asaf Khan, Mahabat Khan and Zulfiqar Khan also possessed some Christian pictures.<sup>157</sup>

To conclude, given the conducive atmosphere for inter-religious dialogue at Akbar's court, there was a marked interest in, and receptivity of Christian faith and beliefs. This interest declined in the subsequent period, but as the case of Muqarrab Khan shows, never quite died down, and was retained by sections of the Mughal nobility. Islam-Christian dialogue and debates continued in the eighteenth century, and scholars like Mulla Mubad and Shah Waliullah compared the two faiths, in a framework informed by comparative religion. The influence of Christianity disseminated the Mughal court culture, and left its indelible mark on Mughal art and architecture.

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<sup>154</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.167.

<sup>155</sup> *ibid.*, p.64.

<sup>156</sup> C.H. Payne, *Akbar and the Jesuits*, p.63.

<sup>157</sup> *Letters Received*, vol.iii, pp.64, 82.





Fig. i. Rudolfo Acqaviva and another Jesuit  
debating with Muslim Divines before Akbar





Fig. ii. Copy of European Engravings;  
one signed by Nadira Banu c.1600-1604 A.D.





Fig. iii. Folio From the Gulshan Album showing European object



fig. iv.

## SEPARATE MINIATURES OF THE MUGHAL SCHOOL

XIII. THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST





Fig. v. The Nativity of Christ





Fig. iv. 1. SEPARATE MINIATURES OF THE MUGHAL SCHOOL  
XIX. THE VIRGIN AND CHILD BY KESHI



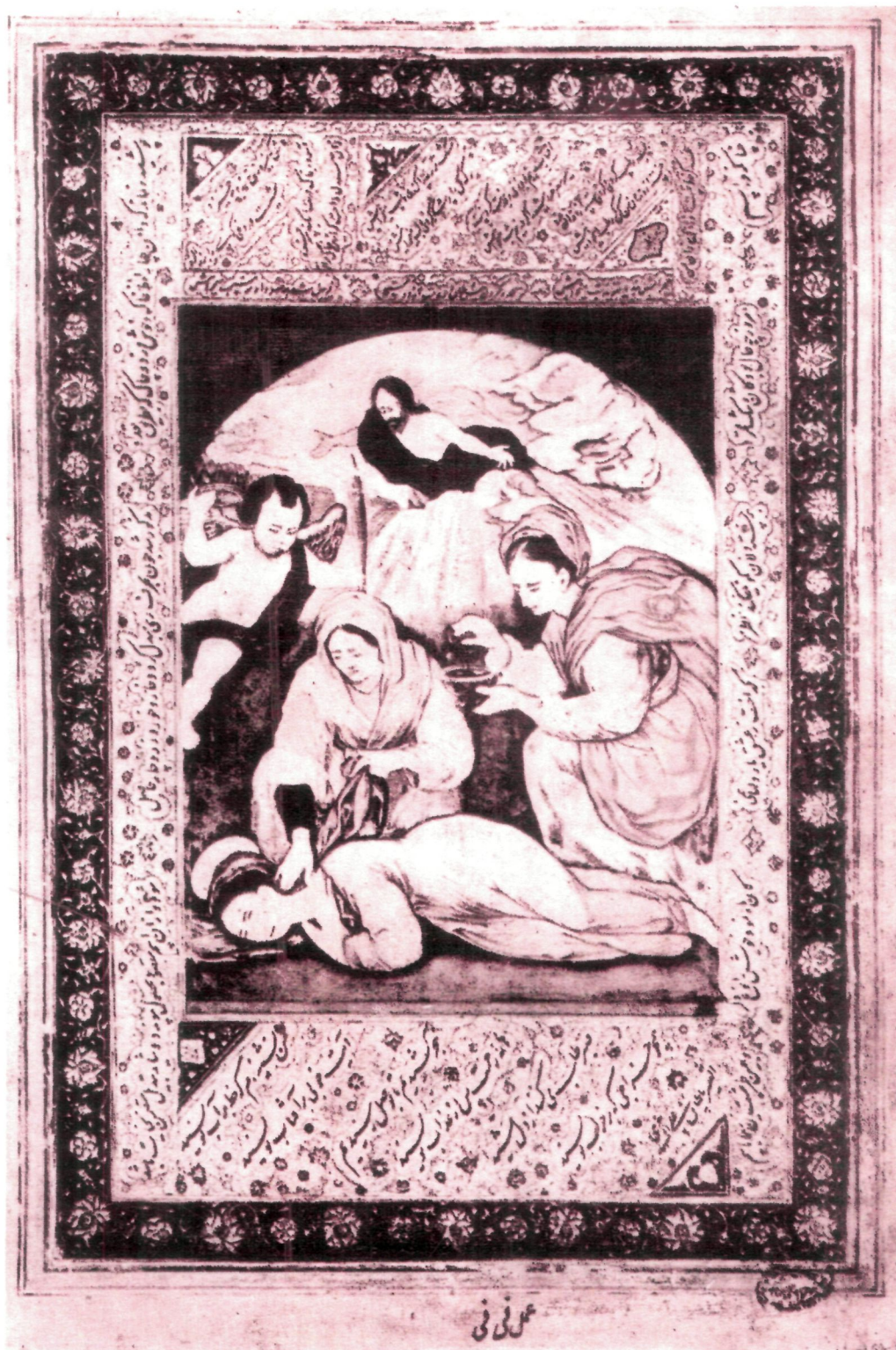


Fig. vii. The Martyrdom of St. Cecilia





Fig. viii. Tobias' Angel

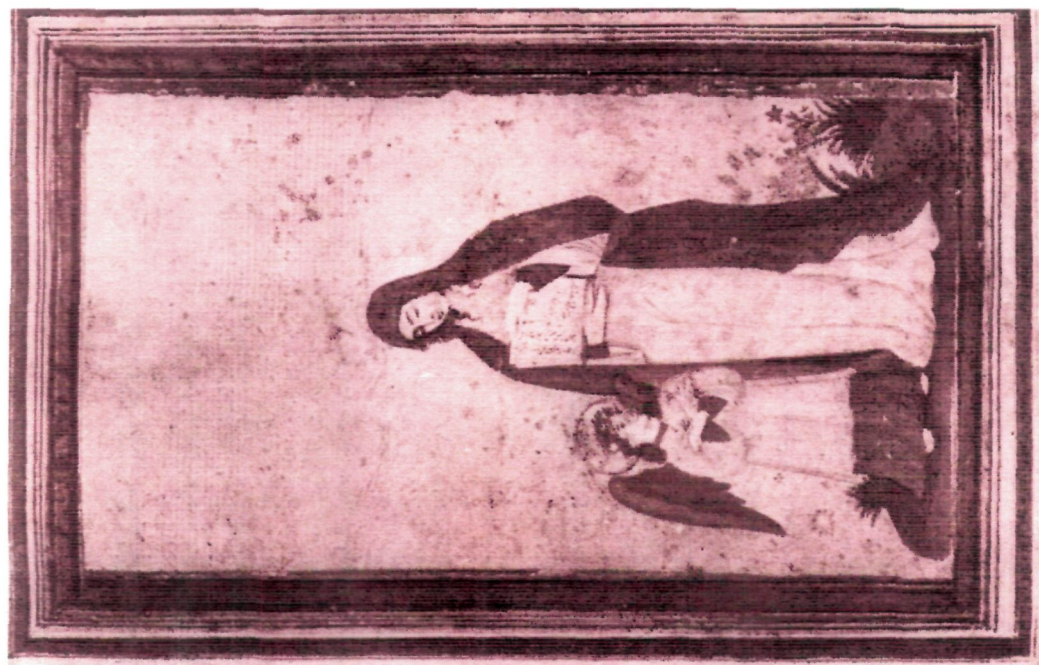


Fig. ix. Virgin and Angel





Fig. x. Jahangir Holding the Picture of Madonna

**CHAPTER V:**  
**The European merchant as the ‘other’  
of Indian merchant**

## The European Merchant as 'the other' of the 'Indian' Merchant

One of the factors that shaped the Mughal policy responses towards the European merchants was a sense of separation between the European and the indigenous merchants. Scholars have not paid adequate attention to the sense of 'difference' that informed Mughal policies towards the European merchants.

By the time the Mughals established their rule, the Portuguese had already established a monopoly on the inter-Asian trade. The main method of enforcement of this so-called monopoly was first, by issuing *cartaz* (or passes), by which they imposed restrictions on the personnel and armaments allowed on the ship, and, second, through piracy. The control of Portuguese of the Red Sea trade was particularly irksome to both Ottomans and Mughals since the Portuguese posed a potential danger to not only the native traders, but also to the hajj pilgrims. Akbar, in a letter in 1586 to Abdullah Khan Uzbek, expressed displeasure regarding the unrest that the Portuguese created by harassing traders and pilgrims to holy places.<sup>1</sup> Badauni also testifies to the fact that Akbar detested their control of the High Seas.<sup>2</sup>

Ostensibly however, Akbar maintained cordial relations with the Portuguese by accepting to take *cartaz* from them to send off his pilgrim ships,<sup>3</sup> a practice which continued under Jahangir.<sup>4</sup> Akbar signed a *farman* on 18 March 1573, perhaps at Broach, instructing the Captains, Governors, administrators and other officials working especially in Surat, Broach, Naussari, and

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<sup>1</sup> Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, vol.iii, p.275; see also *Maktubat-i-Allami (Insha'-i-Abul Fazl)* DAFTAR I, tr. Mansura Haider, Delhi, 1998, P.44).

<sup>2</sup> Abdul Qadir Badauni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, vol. ii, p.150.

<sup>3</sup> M.N.Pearson, *The Portuguese in India*, Hyderabad, 1987, p.27.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p.81.

Velodra (Vadodra) in the province of Gujarat not to disturb the Portuguese in their possession like Diu. It further enjoined to them not to favour Malabar pirates but extend help to Portuguese.<sup>5</sup> As for the general Portuguese merchants, like all other traders, they had to pay custom-duties and the final decisions regarding the fiscal administration rested with the Mughal Emperor. As Akbar went on occupying the port cities of Surat, Broach and Cambay, some Portuguese merchants at Cambay sought from him the special favour of exempting them from the obligation of paying custom-duties for the commodities imported into Cambay by them. Akbar granted the request and reportedly agreed to take the lumpsum payment of 300,000 *cruzados* every year instead as duties to the captain of Cambay.<sup>6</sup>

As their trade contracted towards the mid-sixteenth century, they began to rely more and more on the profits from directing and taxing Asian trade.<sup>7</sup> They now allowed and even fostered Asian trade, even to Red Sea, for thus their custom-duties increased.<sup>8</sup> Their presence was to some extent a decisive factor as far as the routes and commodity composition of the overseas trade is concerned. While in the sixteenth century the South East Asian trade declined largely because of Portuguese interference, the increasing dominance of Gujarati merchants in Red Sea trade was also evident, which remained significant in the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth century. Due to the Dutch, English and the French participation, India's foreign trade, specially the Red

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<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Diogo de Carto, *Da Asia, Decada IX Lisboa, 1786, Part 1*, pp.64-87. cf. K.S.Matthew, *Akbar and Portuguese Maritime Dominance, Akbar and His India*, Irfan Habib (ed.), Delhi, 1997, p.257.

<sup>7</sup> Gupta, Ashin Das and Pearson, M.N. (ed.), *India and the Indian Ocean, 1500-1800*, (Delhi, 1987), p.84-85.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, p.85.

Sea trade, both in terms of volume and value, witnessed a tremendous growth in the seventeenth century and first half of the eighteenth century, and indeed a major role was played by the Indian maritime merchants also. Still, it cannot be denied that the most important change during the eighteenth century was the growing importance of the European factor in the Indian Ocean.<sup>9</sup> This ascendancy of European factor in Indian Ocean was certainly not a sudden process. It was preceded by two centuries of dependence.

The overwhelming and intimidating presence of the Portuguese and their dominance of the maritime trade was one of the factors that shaped the Mughal perception and policies towards the English. The presence of the Portuguese also prevented the Mughal officials from developing better trade relations with the English. In 1618, Sir Thomas Roe wrote to the Company, 'the Portugall houlds all the coast to slaverie, and there is no way to remedie it, unless either the Kyng would build or give us a port or hyre our shipping; but he will not bee drawn to alter his conditions, because hee is not sencible of the dishonour, giving reason he conquered Guzuratt and keepes it in the same condition he found it and upon the same articles and contracts made by Bahud(ur Shah), King of Guzuratt, who made them with the Portingalls before this monarchy was united.'<sup>10</sup>

Some time before the foundation of the English East India Company in 1600 A.D., a number of English travelers like Thomas Stephens, Ralph Fitch, Newberry and Leeds visited Mughal India. Then in 1599, John Mildenhall came during the reign of Akbar, who tried to negotiate with the Emperor 'some kind of commercial

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<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, p.39.

<sup>10</sup> *EFI*, 1618-21, pp. 12-13.

treaty or understanding which should be a basis for the English trade in India.' He failed to secure any treaty with the King and returned unsuccessful.<sup>11</sup> Probably, the experience of Mughal ruling elite of the European merchants with the Portuguese, who had introduced an element of 'force' in the maritime commerce of the high seas, was responsible for their wary attitude towards the English merchants. And this fear was not unfounded. They English also resorted to piratical activities against the Mughal shipping on the Western coast. They began to issue passes to unprotected Indian vessels as early as 1613.<sup>12</sup> As a consequence, Muqarrab Khan, the Governor of Surat, did not allow the English to establish Factory at Surat, and also rebuked them for the robbing of ships coming from Red Sea by one of their factors, Henry Middleton.<sup>13</sup> However, further attempts to open up trade with India were made during the time of Jahangir, when Hawkins, the self-styled 'envoy of the King of England' visited Jahangir's court in 1609. Hawkins met the Emperor at Agra and was given every assurance regarding trade facilities to the English but nothing substantial could be achieved which they believed was due to the intervention of Portuguese.<sup>14</sup> For the same reason, in 1608, when William Hawkins arrived at Surat, Muqarrab Khan (who was the *mutasaddi* of both Surat and Cambay) allowed them to unload their cargo but the local Mughal officials did not permit them to engage in any commercial transaction in Surat.<sup>15</sup> He did not let them establish a

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<sup>11</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.xv.

<sup>12</sup> *Letter Received*, vol.i, p.307.

<sup>13</sup> *Letter Received*, vol.i, p.279.

<sup>14</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) *Early Travels in India 1583-1619*, p.66.

<sup>15</sup> Orme, Robert *Historical Fragments of Mughal Empire 1659-1689*, p.323-4.

factory at Surat,<sup>16</sup> on pretext of which Middleton used force to exchange goods of Indian vessels in Red Sea, specially that of the Gujarati fleets.<sup>17</sup>

Till the time the Portuguese retained their previous position in the perception of the Mughal elite as a formidable sea-power, the English merchants were not much encouraged. But this was not the sole factor. The indigenous merchants were unequivocally against the admission of another European company in the trade of Indian Ocean. In 1612, Middleton was also refused trade at Dabul (Dabhol)<sup>18</sup> not because of Portuguese instigation but ostensibly because as Hawkins himself states that Surat merchants had made declaration at the court that the encouragement to English would mean ruin of trade of Gujarat.<sup>19</sup> Having had the experience of Portuguese piratical activities, the Surat merchants were wary of letting any other European trading Company into maritime trade of the high seas. And in the initial phase, the English traders tried to make an impression upon the Gujarati merchants that they were powerful enough to succeed against the Portuguese.<sup>20</sup> In 1612, Capt. Best and in 1614, Nicholas Downton even inflicted crushing defeat on the Portuguese, but it only served to make the ruling elite more watchful of their activities.<sup>21</sup> The king allowed the English to trade in Mughal dominions, but he also took care to not let them settle and build a factory or even buy a house.<sup>22</sup> Though the

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<sup>16</sup> *Letter Received*, vol.i pp.175-76.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, p.279.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, p.258.

<sup>19</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) *Early Travels in India 1583-1619*, p.66.

<sup>20</sup> *Letters Received*, vol. ii, p.186.

<sup>21</sup> *Tuzuk*, p.274-5, 1614, 9<sup>th</sup> R.Y.

<sup>22</sup> The permission to settle at Surat (i.e. having a factory was not yet given (for details see *EFI*, 1624-29, P.20-21, 310).

Provincial Governors broadly acted as agents of the central administration, they also acted according to their discretion.

One example is of Muqarrab Khan, the Governor of Surat (the prime hinterland of the western coast). He tried to take advantage of friction between the two companies hoping perhaps that their conflict could only be in the interest of the Empire.<sup>23</sup> In 1611, he visited Middleton and in return for some concessions (which were not given eventually), and permission for the setting up of a factory,<sup>24</sup> he asked for a treaty and assurance of English aid in any fighting with the Portuguese.<sup>25</sup> On 27 January 1612 he reiterated his offer to help the English to establish a factory, but within two or three days he asked them to leave the port as the Portuguese, not surprisingly, resented these negotiations and warned Muqarrab Khan to desist, at which he rapidly changed his mind. Again, it was only after a war had ensued between the Portuguese and the English that Muqarrab Khan began to seek the friendship of the English. He was pleased to hear that the English had sunk a Portuguese ship and damaged another.<sup>26</sup> When he heard of the growing hostility between the English and the Portuguese (in 1614-15), he seems to have become friendlier towards the English.<sup>27</sup> In any case, he prudently supported the English because

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<sup>23</sup> *Purchas His Pilgrims*, vol. iv, pp. 225-6.

<sup>24</sup> Account of Sir H. Middleton in *Purchas His Pilgrims*, vol. iii, p. 179; see also Jourdain, John *The Journal of John Jourdain, 1608-17*, pp. 180-2.

<sup>25</sup> *Purchas His Pilgrims*, vol. iv, p. 219: 'that if I [Nicholas Downton] would assist them [the Mughals] against the Portugals, the Nabob would do us all the favour that in his power lyeth.' See also *Purchas His Pilgrims*, vol. iv, pp. 220, 222 and 258.

<sup>26</sup> *Letters Received*, vol. i, p. 138; vol. iii, p. 64.

<sup>27</sup> *Purchas His Pilgrims*, vol. iv, pp. 224-5.



of the fear of Portuguese naval raids.<sup>28</sup> But again, a peace treaty was signed by Muqarrab Khan and the Portuguese Gocalo Pinto da Fonseca on 7 June 1615, which declared that the Mughals and the Portuguese 'will not engage in any trade' with English and Dutch merchants, nor would they be sheltered in ports, or supplied with provisions.<sup>29</sup>

The Mughal perception and policies towards the English in the seventeenth century were not uniform and can be demarcated in two distinct phases. In the first phase, that lasted till about 1630s, roughly speaking, the Mughal administration perceived the English as petty merchants, foreign and inferior.

During this phase, the Mughals outright rejected the English claim to a superior status based on their political connections with the ruler of England. Hawkins' 'embassy' and later Edward's 'embassy' (who having supposedly brought a letter from King James expected a 'better treatment') had failed miserably in getting privileges for English merchants at Surat.<sup>30</sup> Jahangir was fully aware that Surat had become a place of contention between the English and the Portuguese merchants<sup>31</sup> and the English claim that Portuguese attacks on Mughal ships had led Muqarrab Khan to let the English fortify at Surat<sup>32</sup> was totally unfounded. It is clear from a letter written in Dec.1615 by William Edwards to the East India

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<sup>28</sup> Downton wrote that 'the cause of their request [to the English to stay on at Surat], was their feare lest the Viceroy [of the Portuguese] after my departure should come against Surat with all his forces.' Thomas Elkington also writes of Muqarrab Khan's anxiety to befriend the English. *Purchas His Pilgrims*, vol. iv, p. 243.

<sup>29</sup> S. A. I. Tirmizi, *Mughal Documents (1526-1627)*, New Delhi, 1989, pp. 97-8.

<sup>30</sup> *Letter Received*, vol.i, p.26.

<sup>31</sup> *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, p.274-5.

<sup>32</sup> *Letter Received*, vol.ii, p.186.

Company in 1615, that Muqarrab Khan allowed them only 'trade' at Surat.<sup>33</sup> They received a *farman* written to Governor of Surat and Cambay permitting them 'trade and acceptance' in the country.<sup>34</sup>

In 1615, Sir Thomas Roe, the ambassador of King James I came to the court of Jahangir and made a deliberate effort to present himself at the Court as an ambassador of the English monarch, besides working upon getting trading privileges. For the Mughals, on the other hand, he was a representative of the English merchant body, and they were foreign merchants not to be placed on parity with Indian merchants. Obviously, this embassy was also unsuccessful. Nevertheless, Roe devised the plan of escorting Mughal vessels to Red Sea in order to gain acceptance in the Indian trade alongside the Portuguese,<sup>35</sup> even if by force<sup>36</sup> the mercantilist consideration behind which was to stop the bullion inflow into India from Europe and finance Indian trade from the Red Sea trade profits.<sup>37</sup> Earlier an unsuccessful attempt had been made by Henry Middleton through force to gain participation in Red Sea trade.<sup>38</sup> Linked with their desire to gain acceptance in the Red Sea trade was the desire to get permission for settlement in Surat which was a principal port on western coast, from where the Red Sea and Persian Gulf trade was carried on.

One of the major components of Mughal response towards the English and other European merchants was the safeguard of the trading interests of the Indian merchants.

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<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, vol.ii,p.149.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*,vol.iii,p.65.

<sup>35</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.308.

<sup>36</sup> *EFI*, vol.i, p.22.

<sup>37</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.147n., 243.

<sup>38</sup> *Letter Received*, vol.i, p.155-61.

In 1618, Roe drafted proposals for a *nishan* which was submitted to prince Khurram. It included a demand to allow him to land with 'arms' to defend against Portuguese, which was rejected by him.<sup>39</sup> Further, his demand for complete freedom of trade throughout the Empire was completely ignored by Khurram. These proposals submitted by Roe on 15<sup>th</sup> August, 1618 for a *nishan*, and reformed by Khurram were not accepted by Roe and with the mediation and assistance of Afzal Khan (Asaf Khan?), Khurram's secretary, a revised *nishan* was issued.<sup>40</sup> In the revised *nishan*, Roe had to agree not to build any house in or about Surat without obtaining permission from Jahangir. They could only rent a house for merchants' residence and storing merchandise. (In fact, in 1617 when the news regarding a ship reportedly containing building material (reportedly for a Factory at Swally reached the Prince Khurram, an embargo was placed on their trade and they were not allowed to unload that ship).<sup>41</sup> Also, their goods were not to be passed unchecked.<sup>42</sup> Roe took an undertaking that the English were to live at Surat according to laws and regulations of the Empire.<sup>43</sup> The English claimed that by 1613, they had the permission (by a *farman* supposedly given to Thomas Best) to trade with Surat<sup>44</sup> but this *farman* had little value.<sup>45</sup> The permission to settle at Surat (i.e. building a 'factory') was not yet given<sup>46</sup> and the idea of making a fortress at the coast of Gujarat had been outright rejected by Prince

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<sup>39</sup>Foster, W. (ed.) Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.485.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*, p.485.

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*, p.415.

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.*, p.481n.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*,

<sup>44</sup> *Letters Received*, vol.i, p.280.

<sup>45</sup> W.H. Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb: A Study in Indian Economic History*, Reprint, Delhi 1972, p.36.

<sup>46</sup> *EFI*, 1624-29, p.20-21, 310.

Khurram (no contemporary copy of this *nishan* is extant. At the India Office, there is a transcript of it is made in 1789, endorsed by Khurram and signed by Roe).<sup>47</sup>

The English could not get the Mughal Emperor sign the treaty or having an exclusive alliance with them against either Portuguese or the Dutch, because he considered it below his dignity to sign a treaty with the representatives of a foreign merchant body. Roe's proposal to Prince Khurram to let them 'settle' (at Surat) against which they would assume the responsibility of naval defense of Surat against the Portuguese was scornfully rejected by Khurram.<sup>48</sup> Apparently any such 'help' which would put the Emperor under obligation of a foreign trading Company was unacceptable to him. In 1616, Roe tried to convince Jahangir that the Dutch in South and East were building forts as in case of Masulipatam, and would become masters of the port, could only 'somewhat trouble' Jahangir.<sup>49</sup> The repeated English assumptions that the Mughal Emperor shirked making alliances with them or letting them settle and give them concessions because they were apprehensive of Portuguese reactions is not true.<sup>50</sup> However, by the end of the first phase, the Portuguese were gradually virtually wiped out by the English and they had established complete supremacy in the high seas. The English were able to impose successive defeats on the Portuguese, one after the other. In 1622, they captured Ormuz in the Persian Gulf from the Portuguese. In 1633 they defeated the Portuguese at the port of Hugli, thoroughly routing them, their successive victories enabled

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<sup>47</sup> *EFI*, 1622-3, p.321.

<sup>48</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.27.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*, p.303.

<sup>50</sup> *Letters Received*, vol.iv, p.314.

them to establish a maritime supremacy in the Indian Ocean, which, with the Portuguese no longer in contention, came to be gradually recognized by the Mughals.

An important instance of Mughal perception of the English merchants comes from the Red Sea trade dispute in which Thomas Roe played an important role. In 1618, the English East India Company, under the initiative of Roe decided to participate in the trade to Red Sea, in order to enhance its profits from the Indian Ocean.<sup>51</sup> In 1618, the English dispatched *Anne* to Mocha. Encouraged by the profits, in 1619, another ship *Lion* was dispatched to the Red Sea.<sup>52</sup> (This trade 'the ambassador (Roe) told the Company, in reaching home, 'in tyme may be enlarged by the English, and will be the life of Surat and Persia trade.'<sup>53</sup> The English decision to participate in the Red Sea trade created quite an uproar among the Surat merchants, who in alliance the local authorities, seized the English factories and prevented them from buying merchandise from the merchants of Gujarat. When the Factors started their investments for the fleet expected in the autumn, a general boycott was organized, and they were plainly told that unless they would undertake to abandon the Red Sea traffic, they 'should not buy a yard of calico for that purpose.'<sup>54</sup> When the English took the matter to Ishaq Beg, Governor of Surat, he flatly refused to help them.<sup>55</sup> They were specially prevented from buying linen or making big investments in buying for the lading of *Lion*, and when they suspected that they were buying

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<sup>51</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.307-08.

<sup>52</sup> *EFI*, p.xiv.

<sup>53</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.52.

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*

linen from several adjacent places, they called a meeting of all brokers in Surat and surrounding places and decided not to 'buy and sell' any commodity to English.<sup>56</sup> Not only Surat and Nausari, but the Governors of Broach and Baroda were also informed that the English were to be boycotted as per the orders of the Prince finally prohibiting their linen investments in Ahmedabad and confined them to Broach only. The English had to agree to not making any investments in the Red Sea until further orders came from the Prince.<sup>57</sup> The Surat merchants, in fact in alliance with the local authorities, seized the English Factories and prevented them from buying merchandise from the merchants of Gujarat. Consequently, Thomas Roe was forced to take the matter to the Mughal court. In response to his petition concerning the blockade of the Red Sea, Prince Khurram issued a *nishan*, which forbade them from trading between Gujarat and the Red Sea on the ground that their participation in the Red Sea trade was ruining the Gujarat merchants. The *nishan* prohibited the English from trading between Gujarat and the Red Sea since this was the only avenue of overseas trade left to the Indian merchants in the wake of the advent of European Companies.<sup>58</sup> Another issue of controversy was the coral trade. It was a major item of import from the Red Sea<sup>59</sup> (although most part of coral that they sold at Surat was brought by land to Bijapur.<sup>60</sup> The merchants of Surat did not want the English merchants to bring in large quantities of coral in Surat.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> *EFI*, vol.i, p.134-35.

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> Farhat Hasan, *Two Official Documents of Jahangir's Reign relating to the English East India Company*, P. 333, Indian History Congress, Amritsar Session, 1985, (cyclostyled).

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *EFI*, 1624-29, p.258.

<sup>61</sup> *EFI*, vol.i, p.54.

Khurram's *nishan* also forbade the English from importing coral, again on same ground.<sup>62</sup> When the Governor and merchants of Surat wrote a joint petition to the Prince for a *nishan* to forbid sale of coral to the English merchants and their further trade in that commodity on the pretext that it was against their interests,<sup>63</sup> it was accepted. The *nishan* is significant in highlighting the Mughal perception of the English. It would seem from the *nishan* that the Mughal court did make a distinction between the India and the foreign merchants and believed that the Indian merchants, being their subjects, deserved a more favourable treatment than the foreign English merchants.<sup>64</sup> A sense of identification with the Indian merchants, reinforced by a sense of difference with the English is clearly suggested from the *nishan* of Prince Khurram.

Monopoly system was an important part of the imperial economic policies which directly affected the European merchants and their trade. Monopolies in certain articles were imposed for various reasons, such as according to the military exigencies of state as in the case of saltpeter (in 1636), or for revving up revenue for the state, as in the case of indigo (which was monopolized in 1633), gold and silver monopolies. And mostly, these temporary monopolies had to be terminated before their stipulated time, one of these reasons of which was the opposition put up against them, as in the case of indigo where Anglo-Dutch combined opposition made the monopoly difficult to sustain by boycotting its purchase. The Governor of Surat, apprehensive of the falling revenues of his

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<sup>62</sup> F.Hasan, *Two Official Documents of Jahangir's Reign*, p.333.

<sup>63</sup> *The English Factories in India*, ed. W. Foster, 1618-21, p.131

<sup>64</sup> William Biddulph, one of the factors of the English Company at the Mughal court found 'the prince and all generallye tenderinge their own peoples goods and complaints before our shutes and benefitts.' *The English Factories in India, 1618-21*, ed. W. Foster, vol. i, p.174.

port, petitioned to the Emperor to restore the freedom of trade in indigo.<sup>65</sup> Through his mediation some relaxation was given to both English and Dutch through three *farmans*-one to the Governor of Surat, one to English and one to Dutch, to make arrangements to buy indigo at Agra-the proposal was rejected by both English and Dutch. This shows that a foreign merchant body could expect a revision of the Emperor's *firman*, if its interests were adversely affected. It also reflects the collusion between the Mughal officials and the European merchants, who through the mediation of important nobles at the imperial court, could get the imperial orders revised. These nobles, either for financial reasons (e.g. Muiz-ul-Mulk, Governor of Surat,) or for political reasons (e.g. Asaf Khan, the *vakil* and Afzal Khan, the *Diwan-i-kul*) supported them. President Methwold and others in Swally Road (Dec.29) wrote to the Company that although Manohar Das, a *bania*, was the prime monopolist, yet Mir Jumla, High Steward of the King, was principally engaged in the project (1634, O.C.1543 A) and they decided to take advantage of the enmity between Mir Jumla and Asaf Khan who belonged to the different factions at the court, and hooked on Asaf Khan's help.<sup>66</sup> Consequently, on 14<sup>th</sup> April, 1635, the English received the imperial *farman*, dissolving the indigo monopoly and its sale once again became open to all.

In 1636 when the Emperor received complaints from Dutch about attempts of Saif Khan, to monopolize the stock of indigo in his district,<sup>67</sup> a *farman* was issued by the Emperor on Feb.22, 1636, reiterating that indigo monopoly had been taken off and that no

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<sup>65</sup> *EFI*, 1634-36, pp.70-71.

<sup>66</sup> *ibid.*, p.72-73; 1634-36, p.11.

<sup>67</sup> *EFI*, 1634-36, 157n.



one could monopolize indigo in unauthorized manner.<sup>68</sup> Thus while making it clear that the European merchants, like all other merchants of his domain, were protected from any arbitrary act of Mughal officials, another *farman*, which was simultaneously issued, shows that he would neither let the foreign merchants disrupt the trade of Surat, or let the Mughal ports be harmed by them. He wanted the heads (principals) of both English and Dutch factories to be accountable for the activities of their merchants. The *farman* said that the Dutch and English must always keep a deposit of Rs.12 lakhs at Surat and that the Principals of both nations must always remain in Surat and must not go aboard their ships at any time.<sup>69</sup> The *farman* further sought to regulate their movement and activities by ordering that the 'English & Dutch must not resort to any other ports in the Mughal Empire. They were also not allowed to bring ships to any other place except Swally Hole (Swally Marine), where it 'shall not be lawful for them to build any frigates.'<sup>70</sup> Likewise, in a document dated 10 September 1645, a *hasb ul hukum* issued by Saadullah Khan that the English were not expected to a) fortify their factories, b) employ armed guards in their factories, c) refuse to pay regular taxes, and d) construct a fortress for their residence.<sup>71</sup>

Here we again notice the collusion of local Mughal officials with the European merchants, as seeing the opposition that it invited, the Governor did not implement the *farman* to its full

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<sup>68</sup> President Methwold's Diary, Jan. 22-Apr. 6, 1636, (Surat Factory Records, IOR, London, vol.i, p.491; *EFI*, 1634-36, p.157). I am grateful to Dr. Farhat Hasan for this reference.

<sup>69</sup> *EFI*, 1634-36, pp.157, xvi.

<sup>70</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> Bibliotheque Nationale, Suppl. Pers. 482, ff.133(b)-134(a). I am grateful to Dr. Farhat Hasan for this reference also. Also see, Tavernier, Jean Baptiste *Travels in India, 1640-67*, vol.i, pp.6-7.

effect. A similar example can be taken in case of saltpetre monopoly when the cooperation of a Governor helped in making monopoly ineffective. George Tash took assistance of Governor Mir Musa (through gifts) and succeeded in clearing all obstructions to saltpetre business, which was very important for them as in Bengal, they had less trade except in saltpetre.<sup>72</sup> They had large Factories in Patna, kasimbazar and Hughli.<sup>73</sup> When President Methwold said that the English would not submit to conditions of such 'slavery', the Governor pretended that the farman was merely a 'formality' and when Dutch also complained through the Shahbandar, Mirza Mahmud and the King's commissary they got the reply that 'it was not meant for them, but to restrain the English, who had taken to frequenting the Portuguese settlements with their small vessels and were planning to use them in fetching goods by water from Broach and Cambay, which would injure the customs-revenue of Surat.'<sup>74</sup>

After 1630s, however, a new phase in Mughal perception and policies towards the English began to take shape. By this time, the Portuguese had been virtually wiped out by the English and the English maritime supremacy in the Indian Ocean came to be gradually recognized by the Mughals. During this phase, two developments seem to have shaped the Mughal policy towards the English. The first was the English maritime supremacy which allowed the English to engage with the Mughals in the politics of a

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<sup>72</sup> George Tash, Hugh Fenn and Anthony Smith at Ahmedabad in a letter on Feb.28,1647 to Surat, President and Council, *EFI*, 1646-50, p.108.

<sup>73</sup> *EFI*, 1661-64, p.69.

<sup>74</sup> *EFI*, 1634-36, p.57n.

balance of terror. Mughal aggressions in the land were responded by the English in equal measure on the high seas. Thus, there existed between the English and the Mughals a reciprocal 'balance of terror.'<sup>75</sup> The second important development was the growth in overseas trade by the Mughal officials. Mughal ruling elite had been carrying on trade since the beginning. Muqarrab Khan, a noble of Jahangir carried on private trade. His commercial links with both Portuguese and English merchants are time and again alluded to in the Factory Records. Middleton also tells us of the commercial transactions which he conducted along with Muqarrab Khan and Khwaja Nizam. This Khwaja Nizam who appears to have been a business partner of Muqarrab Khan was reportedly such an influential merchant that no other merchant dared to trade with the English 'without his prevention and leave'; and he was thus able to dictate terms to the English merchants.<sup>76</sup> Further, it appears that he owned some ships and carried on private trade.<sup>77</sup> We are told that among his contemporaries, Muqarrab Khan 'hath more adventures at sea than any of this country.'<sup>78</sup> And in his commercial transactions, Muqarrab Khan made full use of his

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<sup>75</sup> *EFI*, 1618-21, pp.138, 237. Also see *The Diaries of Streynsham Master*, 1675-80, ed. R.C.Temple, London, 1911, vol.ii, p.35.

<sup>76</sup> *Purchas His Pilgrims* vol.iii, pp. 180-1; vol.iv, pp. 219-20.

<sup>77</sup> *Purchas His Pilgrims* vol.iii, p. 176; vol.iv, pp. 224-5; *EFI*, 1618-21, p. 19.

<sup>78</sup> *Letters Received*, vol.i, p. 307; *Purchas His Pilgrims* III, p. 2.).

position; we find him forcing the English to sell their goods at lower prices.<sup>79</sup> Nurjahan and her brother Asaf Khan in particular, depended on Roe. She, in turn, became Roe's solicitor and Asaf Khan his 'broker.'<sup>80</sup>

During the second half of the seventeenth century, a large number of Mughal officials were participating in overseas trade. Mughal officials such as Shaista Khan and Mir Jumla had important trading interests in West Asia and South-East Asia. Referring to Mir Jumla, Walter Littleton and Venkata Brahman reported to the Company in 1651 that 'Concerning forran negotiation, hee [Mir Jumla) hath trade to Pegue, Tennassaree, Acheen, Rackan (Arakan, Persia, Bengalla, Moka, Peruck, Maldeevaes and Macassar. Hee hath ten vessels of his owne, and intends to augment them, makeing much preparatyon for building of more.'<sup>81</sup> Imperial ships were regularly dispatched to the ports of Aden and Mokha by members of the imperial court. Nur Jahan, Jahan Ara and other imperial princesses had ships of their own to participate in overseas trade.<sup>82</sup> The result of this was that the interest of the Mughal officials came to be tied up with the interests of the Company. This led to a nebulous and undefined alliance between the two. Though conflicts between the Mughals and English officials were common and frequent, these conflicts did not undermine the larger cooperation among them. This increase in the

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<sup>79</sup> See, for example, *Purchas His Pilgrims*, vol.iv , pp. 21, 23, 24; *Letters Received*, vol.ii, p. 138.

<sup>80</sup> *Letters Received*, vol.i, p.150.

<sup>81</sup> *EFI*, 1651-54, p.12. For details see J.N.Sarkar, *The Life of Mir Jumla*, New Delhi, 1979, p.83-86.

<sup>82</sup> Shireen Moosvi, *Mughal shipping at Surat in the first half of Seventeenth Century*, p.312, Indian History Congress, Calcutta Session, 1990.

participation in overseas trade by the Mughal officials, and the absolute maritime supremacy enjoyed by the English in relation to the Mughals, led to the development of greater cooperation between the English and Mughal officials. This cooperation ultimately led to the development of an alliance between them based on a framework of mutually accepted code of conduct and practices. It was this alliance that considerably facilitated the trading activities of the English in India and contributed in a large measure to their ultimate success and gradual undermining of the interests of the Indian merchants.

**CHAPTER V:**  
**The European merchant as the ‘other’  
of Indian merchant**

## The European Merchant as 'the other' of the 'Indian' Merchant

One of the factors that shaped the Mughal policy responses towards the European merchants was a sense of separation between the European and the indigenous merchants. Scholars have not paid adequate attention to the sense of 'difference' that informed Mughal policies towards the European merchants.

By the time the Mughals established their rule, the Portuguese had already established a monopoly on the inter-Asian trade. The main method of enforcement of this so-called monopoly was first, by issuing *cartaz* (or passes), by which they imposed restrictions on the personnel and armaments allowed on the ship, and, second, through piracy. The control of Portuguese of the Red Sea trade was particularly irksome to both Ottomans and Mughals since the Portuguese posed a potential danger to not only the native traders, but also to the hajj pilgrims. Akbar, in a letter in 1586 to Abdullah Khan Uzbek, expressed displeasure regarding the unrest that the Portuguese created by harassing traders and pilgrims to holy places.<sup>1</sup> Badauni also testifies to the fact that Akbar detested their control of the High Seas.<sup>2</sup>

Ostensibly however, Akbar maintained cordial relations with the Portuguese by accepting to take *cartaz* from them to send off his pilgrim ships,<sup>3</sup> a practice which continued under Jahangir.<sup>4</sup> Akbar signed a *farman* on 18 March 1573, perhaps at Broach, instructing the Captains, Governors, administrators and other officials working especially in Surat, Broach, Naussari, and

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<sup>1</sup> Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, vol.iii, p.275; see also *Maktubat-i-Allami (Insha'-i-Abul Fazl)* DAFTAR I, tr. Mansura Haider, Delhi, 1998, P.44).

<sup>2</sup> Abdul Qadir Badauni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, vol. ii, p.150.

<sup>3</sup> M.N.Pearson, *The Portuguese in India*, Hyderabad, 1987, p.27.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p.81.

Velodra (Vadodra) in the province of Gujarat not to disturb the Portuguese in their possession like Diu. It further enjoined to them not to favour Malabar pirates but extend help to Portuguese.<sup>5</sup> As for the general Portuguese merchants, like all other traders, they had to pay custom-duties and the final decisions regarding the fiscal administration rested with the Mughal Emperor. As Akbar went on occupying the port cities of Surat, Broach and Cambay, some Portuguese merchants at Cambay sought from him the special favour of exempting them from the obligation of paying custom-duties for the commodities imported into Cambay by them. Akbar granted the request and reportedly agreed to take the lumpsum payment of 300,000 *cruzados* every year instead as duties to the captain of Cambay.<sup>6</sup>

As their trade contracted towards the mid-sixteenth century, they began to rely more and more on the profits from directing and taxing Asian trade.<sup>7</sup> They now allowed and even fostered Asian trade, even to Red Sea, for thus their custom-duties increased.<sup>8</sup> Their presence was to some extent a decisive factor as far as the routes and commodity composition of the overseas trade is concerned. While in the sixteenth century the South East Asian trade declined largely because of Portuguese interference, the increasing dominance of Gujarati merchants in Red Sea trade was also evident, which remained significant in the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth century. Due to the Dutch, English and the French participation, India's foreign trade, specially the Red

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<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Diogo de Carto, *Da Asia, Decada IX Lisboa, 1786, Part 1*, pp.64-87. cf. K.S.Matthew, *Akbar and Portuguese Maritime Dominance, Akbar and His India*, Irfan Habib (ed.), Delhi, 1997, p.257.

<sup>7</sup> Gupta, Ashin Das and Pearson, M.N. (ed.), *India and the Indian Ocean, 1500-1800*, (Delhi, 1987), p.84-85.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, p.85.



Sea trade, both in terms of volume and value, witnessed a tremendous growth in the seventeenth century and first half of the eighteenth century, and indeed a major role was played by the Indian maritime merchants also. Still, it cannot be denied that the most important change during the eighteenth century was the growing importance of the European factor in the Indian Ocean.<sup>9</sup> This ascendancy of European factor in Indian Ocean was certainly not a sudden process. It was preceded by two centuries of dependence.

The overwhelming and intimidating presence of the Portuguese and their dominance of the maritime trade was one of the factors that shaped the Mughal perception and policies towards the English. The presence of the Portuguese also prevented the Mughal officials from developing better trade relations with the English. In 1618, Sir Thomas Roe wrote to the Company, 'the Portugall houlds all the coast to slaverie, and there is no way to remedie it, unless either the Kyng would build or give us a port or hyre our shipping; but he will not bee drawn to alter his conditions, because hee is not sencible of the dishonour, giving reason he conquered Guzuratt and keepes it in the same condition he found it and upon the same articles and contracts made by Bahud(ur Shah), King of Guzuratt, who made them with the Portingalls before this monarchy was united.'<sup>10</sup>

Some time before the foundation of the English East India Company in 1600 A.D., a number of English travelers like Thomas Stephens, Ralph Fitch, Newberry and Leeds visited Mughal India. Then in 1599, John Mildenhall came during the reign of Akbar, who tried to negotiate with the Emperor 'some kind of commercial

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<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, p.39.

<sup>10</sup> *EFI*, 1618-21, pp. 12-13.

treaty or understanding which should be a basis for the English trade in India.' He failed to secure any treaty with the King and returned unsuccessful.<sup>11</sup> Probably, the experience of Mughal ruling elite of the European merchants with the Portuguese, who had introduced an element of 'force' in the maritime commerce of the high seas, was responsible for their wary attitude towards the English merchants. And this fear was not unfounded. They English also resorted to piratical activities against the Mughal shipping on the Western coast. They began to issue passes to unprotected Indian vessels as early as 1613.<sup>12</sup> As a consequence, Muqarrab Khan, the Governor of Surat, did not allow the English to establish Factory at Surat, and also rebuked them for the robbing of ships coming from Red Sea by one of their factors, Henry Middleton.<sup>13</sup> However, further attempts to open up trade with India were made during the time of Jahangir, when Hawkins, the self-styled 'envoy of the King of England' visited Jahangir's court in 1609. Hawkins met the Emperor at Agra and was given every assurance regarding trade facilities to the English but nothing substantial could be achieved which they believed was due to the intervention of Portuguese.<sup>14</sup> For the same reason, in 1608, when William Hawkins arrived at Surat, Muqarrab Khan (who was the *mutasaddi* of both Surat and Cambay) allowed them to unload their cargo but the local Mughal officials did not permit them to engage in any commercial transaction in Surat.<sup>15</sup> He did not let them establish a

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<sup>11</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.xv.

<sup>12</sup> *Letter Received*, vol.i, p.307.

<sup>13</sup> *Letter Received*, vol.i, p.279.

<sup>14</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) *Early Travels in India 1583-1619*, p.66.

<sup>15</sup> Orme, Robert *Historical Fragments of Mughal Empire 1659-1689*, p.323-4.

factory at Surat,<sup>16</sup> on pretext of which Middleton used force to exchange goods of Indian vessels in Red Sea, specially that of the Gujarati fleets.<sup>17</sup>

Till the time the Portuguese retained their previous position in the perception of the Mughal elite as a formidable sea-power, the English merchants were not much encouraged. But this was not the sole factor. The indigenous merchants were unequivocally against the admission of another European company in the trade of Indian Ocean. In 1612, Middleton was also refused trade at Dabul (Dabhol)<sup>18</sup> not because of Portuguese instigation but ostensibly because as Hawkins himself states that Surat merchants had made declaration at the court that the encouragement to English would mean ruin of trade of Gujarat.<sup>19</sup> Having had the experience of Portuguese piratical activities, the Surat merchants were wary of letting any other European trading Company into maritime trade of the high seas. And in the initial phase, the English traders tried to make an impression upon the Gujarati merchants that they were powerful enough to succeed against the Portuguese.<sup>20</sup> In 1612, Capt. Best and in 1614, Nicholas Downton even inflicted crushing defeat on the Portuguese, but it only served to make the ruling elite more watchful of their activities.<sup>21</sup> The king allowed the English to trade in Mughal dominions, but he also took care to not let them settle and build a factory or even buy a house.<sup>22</sup> Though the

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<sup>16</sup> *Letter Received*, vol.i pp.175-76.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, p.279.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, p.258.

<sup>19</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) *Early Travels in India 1583-1619*, p.66.

<sup>20</sup> *Letters Received*, vol. ii, p.186.

<sup>21</sup> *Tuzuk*, p.274-5, 1614, 9<sup>th</sup> R.Y.

<sup>22</sup> The permission to settle at Surat (i.e. having a factory was not yet given (for details see *EFI*, 1624-29, P.20-21, 310).

Provincial Governors broadly acted as agents of the central administration, they also acted according to their discretion.

One example is of Muqarrab Khan, the Governor of Surat (the prime hinterland of the western coast). He tried to take advantage of friction between the two companies hoping perhaps that their conflict could only be in the interest of the Empire.<sup>23</sup> In 1611, he visited Middleton and in return for some concessions (which were not given eventually), and permission for the setting up of a factory,<sup>24</sup> he asked for a treaty and assurance of English aid in any fighting with the Portuguese.<sup>25</sup> On 27 January 1612 he reiterated his offer to help the English to establish a factory, but within two or three days he asked them to leave the port as the Portuguese, not surprisingly, resented these negotiations and warned Muqarrab Khan to desist, at which he rapidly changed his mind. Again, it was only after a war had ensued between the Portuguese and the English that Muqarrab Khan began to seek the friendship of the English. He was pleased to hear that the English had sunk a Portuguese ship and damaged another.<sup>26</sup> When he heard of the growing hostility between the English and the Portuguese (in 1614-15), he seems to have become friendlier towards the English.<sup>27</sup> In any case, he prudently supported the English because

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<sup>23</sup> *Purchas His Pilgrims*, vol. iv, pp. 225-6.

<sup>24</sup> Account of Sir H. Middleton in *Purchas His Pilgrims*, vol. iii, p. 179; see also Jourdain, John *The Journal of John Jourdain, 1608-17*, pp. 180-2.

<sup>25</sup> *Purchas His Pilgrims*, vol. iv, p. 219: 'that if I [Nicholas Downton] would assist them [the Mughals] against the Portugals, the Nabob would do us all the favour that in his power lyeth.' See also *Purchas His Pilgrims*, vol. iv, pp. 220, 222 and 258.

<sup>26</sup> *Letters Received*, vol. i, p. 138; vol. iii, p. 64.

<sup>27</sup> *Purchas His Pilgrims*, vol. iv, pp. 224-5.

of the fear of Portuguese naval raids.<sup>28</sup> But again, a peace treaty was signed by Muqarrab Khan and the Portuguese Gocalo Pinto da Fonseca on 7 June 1615, which declared that the Mughals and the Portuguese 'will not engage in any trade' with English and Dutch merchants, nor would they be sheltered in ports, or supplied with provisions.<sup>29</sup>

The Mughal perception and policies towards the English in the seventeenth century were not uniform and can be demarcated in two distinct phases. In the first phase, that lasted till about 1630s, roughly speaking, the Mughal administration perceived the English as petty merchants, foreign and inferior.

During this phase, the Mughals outright rejected the English claim to a superior status based on their political connections with the ruler of England. Hawkins' 'embassy' and later Edward's 'embassy' (who having supposedly brought a letter from King James expected a 'better treatment') had failed miserably in getting privileges for English merchants at Surat.<sup>30</sup> Jahangir was fully aware that Surat had become a place of contention between the English and the Portuguese merchants<sup>31</sup> and the English claim that Portuguese attacks on Mughal ships had led Muqarrab Khan to let the English fortify at Surat<sup>32</sup> was totally unfounded. It is clear from a letter written in Dec.1615 by William Edwards to the East India

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<sup>28</sup> Downton wrote that 'the cause of their request [to the English to stay on at Surat], was their feare lest the Viceroy [of the Portuguese] after my departure should come against Surat with all his forces.' Thomas Elkington also writes of Muqarrab Khan's anxiety to befriend the English. *Purchas His Pilgrims*, vol. iv, p. 243.

<sup>29</sup> S. A. I. Tirmizi, *Mughal Documents (1526-1627)*, New Delhi, 1989, pp. 97-8.

<sup>30</sup> *Letter Received*, vol.i, p.26.

<sup>31</sup> *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, p.274-5.

<sup>32</sup> *Letter Received*, vol.ii, p.186.

Company in 1615, that Muqarrab Khan allowed them only 'trade' at Surat.<sup>33</sup> They received a *farman* written to Governor of Surat and Cambay permitting them 'trade and acceptance' in the country.<sup>34</sup>

In 1615, Sir Thomas Roe, the ambassador of King James I came to the court of Jahangir and made a deliberate effort to present himself at the Court as an ambassador of the English monarch, besides working upon getting trading privileges. For the Mughals, on the other hand, he was a representative of the English merchant body, and they were foreign merchants not to be placed on parity with Indian merchants. Obviously, this embassy was also unsuccessful. Nevertheless, Roe devised the plan of escorting Mughal vessels to Red Sea in order to gain acceptance in the Indian trade alongside the Portuguese,<sup>35</sup> even if by force<sup>36</sup> the mercantilist consideration behind which was to stop the bullion inflow into India from Europe and finance Indian trade from the Red Sea trade profits.<sup>37</sup> Earlier an unsuccessful attempt had been made by Henry Middleton through force to gain participation in Red Sea trade.<sup>38</sup> Linked with their desire to gain acceptance in the Red Sea trade was the desire to get permission for settlement in Surat which was a principal port on western coast, from where the Red Sea and Persian Gulf trade was carried on.

One of the major components of Mughal response towards the English and other European merchants was the safeguard of the trading interests of the Indian merchants.

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<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, vol.ii,p.149.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*,vol.iii,p.65.

<sup>35</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.308.

<sup>36</sup> *EFI*, vol.i, p.22.

<sup>37</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.147n., 243.

<sup>38</sup> *Letter Received*, vol.i, p.155-61.

In 1618, Roe drafted proposals for a *nishan* which was submitted to prince Khurram. It included a demand to allow him to land with 'arms' to defend against Portuguese, which was rejected by him.<sup>39</sup> Further, his demand for complete freedom of trade throughout the Empire was completely ignored by Khurram. These proposals submitted by Roe on 15<sup>th</sup> August, 1618 for a *nishan*, and reformed by Khurram were not accepted by Roe and with the mediation and assistance of Afzal Khan (Asaf Khan?), Khurram's secretary, a revised *nishan* was issued.<sup>40</sup> In the revised *nishan*, Roe had to agree not to build any house in or about Surat without obtaining permission from Jahangir. They could only rent a house for merchants' residence and storing merchandise. (In fact, in 1617 when the news regarding a ship reportedly containing building material (reportedly for a Factory at Swally reached the Prince Khurram, an embargo was placed on their trade and they were not allowed to unload that ship).<sup>41</sup> Also, their goods were not to be passed unchecked.<sup>42</sup> Roe took an undertaking that the English were to live at Surat according to laws and regulations of the Empire.<sup>43</sup> The English claimed that by 1613, they had the permission (by a *farman* supposedly given to Thomas Best) to trade with Surat<sup>44</sup> but this *farman* had little value.<sup>45</sup> The permission to settle at Surat (i.e. building a 'factory') was not yet given<sup>46</sup> and the idea of making a fortress at the coast of Gujarat had been outright rejected by Prince

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<sup>39</sup>Foster, W. (ed.) Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.485.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*, p.485.

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*, p.415.

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.*, p.481n.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*,

<sup>44</sup> *Letters Received*, vol.i, p.280.

<sup>45</sup> W.H. Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb: A Study in Indian Economic History*, Reprint, Delhi 1972, p.36.

<sup>46</sup> *EFI*, 1624-29, p.20-21, 310.

Khurram (no contemporary copy of this *nishan* is extant. At the India Office, there is a transcript of it is made in 1789, endorsed by Khurram and signed by Roe).<sup>47</sup>

The English could not get the Mughal Emperor sign the treaty or having an exclusive alliance with them against either Portuguese or the Dutch, because he considered it below his dignity to sign a treaty with the representatives of a foreign merchant body. Roe's proposal to Prince Khurram to let them 'settle' (at Surat) against which they would assume the responsibility of naval defense of Surat against the Portuguese was scornfully rejected by Khurram.<sup>48</sup> Apparently any such 'help' which would put the Emperor under obligation of a foreign trading Company was unacceptable to him. In 1616, Roe tried to convince Jahangir that the Dutch in South and East were building forts as in case of Masulipatam, and would become masters of the port, could only 'somewhat trouble' Jahangir.<sup>49</sup> The repeated English assumptions that the Mughal Emperor shirked making alliances with them or letting them settle and give them concessions because they were apprehensive of Portuguese reactions is not true.<sup>50</sup> However, by the end of the first phase, the Portuguese were gradually virtually wiped out by the English and they had established complete supremacy in the high seas. The English were able to impose successive defeats on the Portuguese, one after the other. In 1622, they captured Ormuz in the Persian Gulf from the Portuguese. In 1633 they defeated the Portuguese at the port of Hugli, thoroughly routing them, their successive victories enabled

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<sup>47</sup> *EFI*, 1622-3, p.321.

<sup>48</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.27.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*, p.303.

<sup>50</sup> *Letters Received*, vol.iv, p.314.



them to establish a maritime supremacy in the Indian Ocean, which, with the Portuguese no longer in contention, came to be gradually recognized by the Mughals.

An important instance of Mughal perception of the English merchants comes from the Red Sea trade dispute in which Thomas Roe played an important role. In 1618, the English East India Company, under the initiative of Roe decided to participate in the trade to Red Sea, in order to enhance its profits from the Indian Ocean.<sup>51</sup> In 1618, the English dispatched *Anne* to Mocha. Encouraged by the profits, in 1619, another ship *Lion* was dispatched to the Red Sea.<sup>52</sup> (This trade 'the ambassador (Roe) told the Company, in reaching home, 'in tyme may be enlarged by the English, and will be the life of Surat and Persia trade.'<sup>53</sup> The English decision to participate in the Red Sea trade created quite an uproar among the Surat merchants, who in alliance the local authorities, seized the English factories and prevented them from buying merchandise from the merchants of Gujarat. When the Factors started their investments for the fleet expected in the autumn, a general boycott was organized, and they were plainly told that unless they would undertake to abandon the Red Sea traffic, they 'should not buy a yard of calico for that purpose.'<sup>54</sup> When the English took the matter to Ishaq Beg, Governor of Surat, he flatly refused to help them.<sup>55</sup> They were specially prevented from buying linen or making big investments in buying for the lading of *Lion*, and when they suspected that they were buying

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<sup>51</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.307-08.

<sup>52</sup> *EFI*, p.xiv.

<sup>53</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.52.

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*

linen from several adjacent places, they called a meeting of all brokers in Surat and surrounding places and decided not to 'buy and sell' any commodity to English.<sup>56</sup> Not only Surat and Nausari, but the Governors of Broach and Baroda were also informed that the English were to be boycotted as per the orders of the Prince finally prohibiting their linen investments in Ahmedabad and confined them to Broach only. The English had to agree to not making any investments in the Red Sea until further orders came from the Prince.<sup>57</sup> The Surat merchants, in fact in alliance with the local authorities, seized the English Factories and prevented them from buying merchandise from the merchants of Gujarat. Consequently, Thomas Roe was forced to take the matter to the Mughal court. In response to his petition concerning the blockade of the Red Sea, Prince Khurram issued a *nishan*, which forbade them from trading between Gujarat and the Red Sea on the ground that their participation in the Red Sea trade was ruining the Gujarat merchants. The *nishan* prohibited the English from trading between Gujarat and the Red Sea since this was the only avenue of overseas trade left to the Indian merchants in the wake of the advent of European Companies.<sup>58</sup> Another issue of controversy was the coral trade. It was a major item of import from the Red Sea<sup>59</sup> (although most part of coral that they sold at Surat was brought by land to Bijapur.<sup>60</sup> The merchants of Surat did not want the English merchants to bring in large quantities of coral in Surat.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> *EFI*, vol.i, p.134-35.

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> Farhat Hasan, *Two Official Documents of Jahangir's Reign relating to the English East India Company*, P. 333, Indian History Congress, Amritsar Session, 1985, (cyclostyled).

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *EFI*, 1624-29, p.258.

<sup>61</sup> *EFI*, vol.i, p.54.

Khurram's *nishan* also forbade the English from importing coral, again on same ground.<sup>62</sup> When the Governor and merchants of Surat wrote a joint petition to the Prince for a *nishan* to forbid sale of coral to the English merchants and their further trade in that commodity on the pretext that it was against their interests,<sup>63</sup> it was accepted. The *nishan* is significant in highlighting the Mughal perception of the English. It would seem from the *nishan* that the Mughal court did make a distinction between the India and the foreign merchants and believed that the Indian merchants, being their subjects, deserved a more favourable treatment than the foreign English merchants.<sup>64</sup> A sense of identification with the Indian merchants, reinforced by a sense of difference with the English is clearly suggested from the *nishan* of Prince Khurram.

Monopoly system was an important part of the imperial economic policies which directly affected the European merchants and their trade. Monopolies in certain articles were imposed for various reasons, such as according to the military exigencies of state as in the case of saltpeter (in 1636), or for revving up revenue for the state, as in the case of indigo (which was monopolized in 1633), gold and silver monopolies. And mostly, these temporary monopolies had to be terminated before their stipulated time, one of these reasons of which was the opposition put up against them, as in the case of indigo where Anglo-Dutch combined opposition made the monopoly difficult to sustain by boycotting its purchase. The Governor of Surat, apprehensive of the falling revenues of his

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<sup>62</sup> F.Hasan, *Two Official Documents of Jahangir's Reign*, p.333.

<sup>63</sup> *The English Factories in India*, ed. W. Foster, 1618-21, p.131

<sup>64</sup> William Biddulph, one of the factors of the English Company at the Mughal court found 'the prince and all generallye tenderinge their own peoples goods and complaints before our shutes and benefitts.' *The English Factories in India, 1618-21*, ed. W. Foster, vol. i, p.174.

port, petitioned to the Emperor to restore the freedom of trade in indigo.<sup>65</sup> Through his mediation some relaxation was given to both English and Dutch through three *farmans*-one to the Governor of Surat, one to English and one to Dutch, to make arrangements to buy indigo at Agra-the proposal was rejected by both English and Dutch. This shows that a foreign merchant body could expect a revision of the Emperor's *firman*, if its interests were adversely affected. It also reflects the collusion between the Mughal officials and the European merchants, who through the mediation of important nobles at the imperial court, could get the imperial orders revised. These nobles, either for financial reasons (e.g. Muiz-ul-Mulk, Governor of Surat,) or for political reasons (e.g. Asaf Khan, the *vakil* and Afzal Khan, the *Diwan-i-kul*) supported them. President Methwold and others in Swally Road (Dec.29) wrote to the Company that although Manohar Das, a *bania*, was the prime monopolist, yet Mir Jumla, High Steward of the King, was principally engaged in the project (1634, O.C.1543 A) and they decided to take advantage of the enmity between Mir Jumla and Asaf Khan who belonged to the different factions at the court, and hooked on Asaf Khan's help.<sup>66</sup> Consequently, on 14<sup>th</sup> April, 1635, the English received the imperial *farman*, dissolving the indigo monopoly and its sale once again became open to all.

In 1636 when the Emperor received complaints from Dutch about attempts of Saif Khan, to monopolize the stock of indigo in his district,<sup>67</sup> a *farman* was issued by the Emperor on Feb.22, 1636, reiterating that indigo monopoly had been taken off and that no

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<sup>65</sup> *EFI*, 1634-36, pp.70-71.

<sup>66</sup> *ibid.*, p.72-73; 1634-36, p.11.

<sup>67</sup> *EFI*, 1634-36, 157n.

one could monopolize indigo in unauthorized manner.<sup>68</sup> Thus while making it clear that the European merchants, like all other merchants of his domain, were protected from any arbitrary act of Mughal officials, another *farman*, which was simultaneously issued, shows that he would neither let the foreign merchants disrupt the trade of Surat, or let the Mughal ports be harmed by them. He wanted the heads (principals) of both English and Dutch factories to be accountable for the activities of their merchants. The *farman* said that the Dutch and English must always keep a deposit of Rs.12 lakhs at Surat and that the Principals of both nations must always remain in Surat and must not go aboard their ships at any time.<sup>69</sup> The *farman* further sought to regulate their movement and activities by ordering that the 'English & Dutch must not resort to any other ports in the Mughal Empire. They were also not allowed to bring ships to any other place except Swally Hole (Swally Marine), where it 'shall not be lawful for them to build any frigates.'<sup>70</sup> Likewise, in a document dated 10 September 1645, a *hasb ul hukum* issued by Saadullah Khan that the English were not expected to a) fortify their factories, b) employ armed guards in their factories, c) refuse to pay regular taxes, and d) construct a fortress for their residence.<sup>71</sup>

Here we again notice the collusion of local Mughal officials with the European merchants, as seeing the opposition that it invited, the Governor did not implement the *farman* to its full

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<sup>68</sup> President Methwold's Diary, Jan. 22-Apr. 6, 1636, (Surat Factory Records, IOR, London, vol.i, p.491; *EFI*, 1634-36, p.157). I am grateful to Dr. Farhat Hasan for this reference.

<sup>69</sup> *EFI*, 1634-36, pp.157, xvi.

<sup>70</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> Bibliotheque Nationale, Suppl. Pers. 482, ff.133(b)-134(a). I am grateful to Dr. Farhat Hasan for this reference also. Also see, Tavernier, Jean Baptiste *Travels in India, 1640-67*, vol.i, pp.6-7.

effect. A similar example can be taken in case of saltpetre monopoly when the cooperation of a Governor helped in making monopoly ineffective. George Tash took assistance of Governor Mir Musa (through gifts) and succeeded in clearing all obstructions to saltpetre business, which was very important for them as in Bengal, they had less trade except in saltpetre.<sup>72</sup> They had large Factories in Patna, kasimbazar and Hughli.<sup>73</sup> When President Methwold said that the English would not submit to conditions of such 'slavery', the Governor pretended that the farman was merely a 'formality' and when Dutch also complained through the Shahbandar, Mirza Mahmud and the King's commissary they got the reply that 'it was not meant for them, but to restrain the English, who had taken to frequenting the Portuguese settlements with their small vessels and were planning to use them in fetching goods by water from Broach and Cambay, which would injure the customs-revenue of Surat.'<sup>74</sup>

After 1630s, however, a new phase in Mughal perception and policies towards the English began to take shape. By this time, the Portuguese had been virtually wiped out by the English and the English maritime supremacy in the Indian Ocean came to be gradually recognized by the Mughals. During this phase, two developments seem to have shaped the Mughal policy towards the English. The first was the English maritime supremacy which allowed the English to engage with the Mughals in the politics of a

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<sup>72</sup> George Tash, Hugh Fenn and Anthony Smith at Ahmedabad in a letter on Feb.28,1647 to Surat, President and Council, *EFI*, 1646-50, p.108.

<sup>73</sup> *EFI*, 1661-64, p.69.

<sup>74</sup> *EFI*, 1634-36, p.57n.

balance of terror. Mughal aggressions in the land were responded by the English in equal measure on the high seas. Thus, there existed between the English and the Mughals a reciprocal 'balance of terror.'<sup>75</sup> The second important development was the growth in overseas trade by the Mughal officials. Mughal ruling elite had been carrying on trade since the beginning. Muqarrab Khan, a noble of Jahangir carried on private trade. His commercial links with both Portuguese and English merchants are time and again alluded to in the Factory Records. Middleton also tells us of the commercial transactions which he conducted along with Muqarrab Khan and Khwaja Nizam. This Khwaja Nizam who appears to have been a business partner of Muqarrab Khan was reportedly such an influential merchant that no other merchant dared to trade with the English 'without his prevention and leave'; and he was thus able to dictate terms to the English merchants.<sup>76</sup> Further, it appears that he owned some ships and carried on private trade.<sup>77</sup> We are told that among his contemporaries, Muqarrab Khan 'hath more adventures at sea than any of this country.'<sup>78</sup> And in his commercial transactions, Muqarrab Khan made full use of his

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<sup>75</sup> *EFI*, 1618-21, pp.138, 237. Also see *The Diaries of Streynsham Master*, 1675-80, ed. R.C.Temple, London, 1911, vol.ii, p.35.

<sup>76</sup> *Purchas His Pilgrims* vol.iii, pp. 180-1; vol.iv, pp. 219-20.

<sup>77</sup> *Purchas His Pilgrims* vol.iii, p. 176; vol.iv, pp. 224-5; *EFI*, 1618-21, p. 19.

<sup>78</sup> *Letters Received*, vol.i, p. 307; *Purchas His Pilgrims* III, p. 2.).

position; we find him forcing the English to sell their goods at lower prices.<sup>79</sup> Nurjahan and her brother Asaf Khan in particular, depended on Roe. She, in turn, became Roe's solicitor and Asaf Khan his 'broker.'<sup>80</sup>

During the second half of the seventeenth century, a large number of Mughal officials were participating in overseas trade. Mughal officials such as Shaista Khan and Mir Jumla had important trading interests in West Asia and South-East Asia. Referring to Mir Jumla, Walter Littleton and Venkata Brahman reported to the Company in 1651 that 'Concerning forran negotiation, hee [Mir Jumla) hath trade to Pegue, Tennassaree, Acheen, Rackan (Arakan, Persia, Bengalla, Moka, Peruck, Maldeevaes and Macassar. Hee hath ten vessels of his owne, and intends to augment them, makeing much preparatyon for building of more.'<sup>81</sup> Imperial ships were regularly dispatched to the ports of Aden and Mokha by members of the imperial court. Nur Jahan, Jahan Ara and other imperial princesses had ships of their own to participate in overseas trade.<sup>82</sup> The result of this was that the interest of the Mughal officials came to be tied up with the interests of the Company. This led to a nebulous and undefined alliance between the two. Though conflicts between the Mughals and English officials were common and frequent, these conflicts did not undermine the larger cooperation among them. This increase in the

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<sup>79</sup> See, for example, *Purchas His Pilgrims*, vol.iv , pp. 21, 23, 24; *Letters Received*, vol.ii, p. 138.

<sup>80</sup> *Letters Received*, vol.i, p.150.

<sup>81</sup> *EFI*, 1651-54, p.12. For details see J.N.Sarkar, *The Life of Mir Jumla*, New Delhi, 1979, p.83-86.

<sup>82</sup> Shireen Moosvi, *Mughal shipping at Surat in the first half of Seventeenth Century*, p.312, Indian History Congress, Calcutta Session, 1990.



participation in overseas trade by the Mughal officials, and the absolute maritime supremacy enjoyed by the English in relation to the Mughals, led to the development of greater cooperation between the English and Mughal officials. This cooperation ultimately led to the development of an alliance between them based on a framework of mutually accepted code of conduct and practices. It was this alliance that considerably facilitated the trading activities of the English in India and contributed in a large measure to their ultimate success and gradual undermining of the interests of the Indian merchants.

**CHAPTER VI:**  
**European piracy and maritime**  
**supremacy in Mughal perception**

## Mughal Perception of European Maritime Supremacy and Piracy

Piracy was not unknown either in the Islamic West (the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman II's (1520-66) pirate-ships operated in the Mediterranean sea) or in the Indian Ocean. Even long before the Portuguese arrived on the scene, the Indian Ocean had been infested with Malabar and other pirates (against whom the merchants had to make their own arrangements) who operated in the gulf of Persia and Red Sea even after the European piracy became a major concern in the sixteenth, seventeenth and first half of eighteenth century. A few indigenous pirates were Malabars, Sanganyans of Beyt and Dwarka, the Koli rovers of Gujarat, the Warrals of Diu and Gogha, the Muscat Arabs. The Maharattas, wrote Khafi Khan, also indulged in piracy.<sup>1</sup> They had in their possession the newly built forts of Khanderi, Kalaba, Kasa and Katora off the coast opposite Janjira, the island-fortress in occupation of the *habshis* (Abyssinians). From these they attacked and captured vessels going to and coming from the ports of west and south-east Asia. Similarly, the Sakana also called Bawaril, as well as those based on the Sorath (Saurashtra) coast, were

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<sup>1</sup> Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab-al-Lubab*, Calcutta, 1870, p.428.

notorious for piracies, and from time to time attacked the small ships that came from Bandar-Abbas and Muscat.<sup>2</sup>

By 1556, the Portuguese were firmly established on west coast with a large number of factories there. By the first half of sixteenth century, city of Diu and Bassein with lands attached to them in the kingdom of Gujarat were also in possession of Portugal. Similarly, Chaul, Bhatkal and all those areas where Portuguese had fortresses were under the Portuguese king.<sup>3</sup> Bombay was under Portugal since 1550.<sup>4</sup> They were able to regulate and restrict the traffic of Indian merchants in the Indian Ocean to a large extent by the introduction of a system of *cartaz* which was introduced by the Portuguese in 1502 after a war with the Zamorin of Calicut.<sup>5</sup> *Cartaz* was used to implement monopoly and supremacy over maritime trade in Indian Ocean regions.<sup>6</sup> Portuguese officials were soon detailed to guard coastal regions to

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<sup>2</sup> *ibid.* According to Khafi Khan however, one difference between the Indian and the Europeans, particularly the English pirates, was that while the former never attacked the *hajj* pilgrim traffic, the latter thrived on it. (Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*, Calcutta, 1870, vol.ii, p.428).

<sup>3</sup> K.S.Matthew, *Indo-Portuguese Trade and the Fuggers of Germany*, Delhi, 1997, p.69.

<sup>4</sup> John Burnell, *Bombay in the Days of Queen Anne*, London, 1933, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> K.S.Matthew, *Indo-Portuguese Trade and the Fuggers of Germany*, Delhi, 1997, p.69; An amount of 5 *pardaos* for each *cartaz* was charged. (Historical Archives of Goa, MSS, Codex no. 3027, fol.21; cf. M.N.Pearson, *The Portuguese in India*, Hyderabad, 1987, p.71).

<sup>6</sup> M.N.Pearson, *The Portuguese in India*, p.78.

prevent other ships from conducting trade with any part of India and were asked to capture all ships not equipped with *cartazes*.<sup>7</sup> They compelled Bahadur Shah of Gujarat, to accept the system of *cartaz* under the terms and conditions of the treaty signed on 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 1534. Under its terms, vessels going to straits of Mocha via Bassein had to buy *cartaz*. (this treaty was repeated between these two parties on 25 October, 1535).<sup>8</sup> Their claim to maritime supremacy had piracy as an essential element needed to reinforce it. They prevented journeys to Mocha and deterred Malabar ships by burning them and guarded the ships to Cambay coming from Goa and other places<sup>9</sup> and gave *cartaz* for southwards trade as well as for Red Sea trade.<sup>10</sup> Akbar broadly maintained cordial relations with the Portuguese by accepting to take *cartaz* from them to send off his pilgrim ships,<sup>11</sup> a practice which continued under Jahangir.<sup>12</sup> In the *cartaz* issued to Bhimji Parekh under the orders of Jahangir for the ship called *Mubarakshahi* on 18<sup>th</sup> May 1620, special reference is made to the tradition of issuing a free *cartaz* every

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<sup>7</sup> Barros, Decada I, Part 2, p.21; Decada II, Part 1, p.181, cf. K.S.Matthew, *Indo-Portuguese Trade and the Fuggers of Germany*, p.71.

<sup>8</sup> M.N.Pearson, *The Portuguese in India*, p.79.

<sup>9</sup> Jourdain, John *The Journal of John Jourdain, 1608-17*, p.173.

<sup>10</sup> *Letter Received*, vol.i, p.258.

<sup>11</sup> M.N.Pearson, *The Portuguese in India*, p.27.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, p.81.

year.<sup>13</sup> This implies that the arrangement in vogue from 1573 when Akbar agreed to take *cartazes*, was not discontinued during his lifetime and afterwards, however odious it might have been thought to be. Akbar signed a *farman* on 18 March 1573, perhaps at Broach, instructing the Captains, Governors, administrators and other officials working especially in Surat, Broach, Naussari, and Velodra (Vadodra) in the province of Gujarat not to disturb the Portuguese in their possession like Diu. It further enjoined to them not to favour Malabar pirates but extend help to Portuguese.<sup>14</sup>

Akbar himself consented to take *cartaz* from the Portuguese for the imperial ships leaving Gujarat coast every year for Persian Gulf and Red Sea (a practice which continued even under Jahangir).<sup>15</sup> The control of Portuguese of the Red Sea trade was detested by Mughals since the Portuguese posed a potential danger to not only the native traders, but also to the hajj pilgrims. Akbar, in a letter in 1586 to Abdullah Khan Uzbek, expressed displeasure regarding the unrest that the Portuguese created by harassing traders and pilgrims

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<sup>13</sup> MSS. Historical Archives of Goa, Codex no. 1043 f.150, cf. K.S. Mathew, Akbar and Portuguese Maritime Dominance, *Akbar and His India*, Delhi, 1997, p.264.

<sup>14</sup> M.N.Pearson, *The Portuguese in India*, p.81.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, p.27.

to holy places.<sup>16</sup> Badauni also testifies to the fact that Akbar detested their control of the High Seas.<sup>17</sup> Monserrate reports that 'the king and indeed all the Mongols take it exceedingly ill that they are compelled, if they wish for safety on their sea-voyages, to come to Diu and ask for a safe-conduct, which they can only obtain on certain conditions.'<sup>18</sup> Akbar was of the opinion that the *Feringis*, who turned out to be a great threat to the pilgrimage to Mecca as well as to the trade, should be driven away from the Indian Ocean.<sup>19</sup> It was considered quite humiliating for so powerful an Emperor as Akbar to ask for passes from the Portuguese, it being held by the people that the obligation of taking passes for the ships of the Emperor was an infringement of his dignity.<sup>20</sup> Though Akbar had instructed his officials in Malwa and Gujarat to take necessary steps to drive away the Portuguese with the assistance of Deccan rulers, there is no record of any effective expedition against the Portuguese.

Private traders like Abdur Rahim Khan paid tax to obtain passes and ensure the safety and security of the passengers aboard

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<sup>16</sup> *Akbarnama*, III, P.275; see also *Maktubat-i-Allami (Insha'-i-Abul Fazl)*, DAFTAR I, tr. Mansura Haider, p.44.

<sup>17</sup> Badauni, Abdul Qadir *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, p.150.

<sup>18</sup> Monserrate, Fr. A. *Commentary on his Journey to the Court of Akbar*, p.166.

<sup>19</sup> Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, vol.iii, p.757.

<sup>20</sup> David Lopes, (ed.) *Historia dos Portugueses no Malabar por Zinadim: Manuscrito Arabe do Seculo XVI*, Lisboa, 1898, p.96.cf. M.N.Pearson, *The Portuguese in India*, p.2.

their ships. Malik Ayaz, chief Governor of Sultanate of Gujarat in 1573, was able to keep Gujarat ports secure from *firangis* (Portuguese), but later, their influence increased and no ship could dare depart without their pass (*cartaz*), except from Surat 'owing solely to the gallantry and bravery of those entrusted with the government of the city of Surat.'<sup>21</sup> Several attempts were made by Akbar to control piracy, but these measures were unsuccessful. Despite Abul Fazl's assertion that 'India was an abode of peace and the vagabonds of Gujarat been subdued by Akbar and the masters of the peninsulas or countries of European islands (*amiran-i-jazair-i-firang*), who were a stumbling block in the way of *hijaz* had become submissive and obedient,'<sup>22</sup> Portuguese piracy continued. Five ships loaded with goods from Jeddah in the Red Sea reached Goga in August 1577, were captured by Portuguese and later another vessel belonging to the Emperor too was sighted at Goga and was captured by them although it was later returned to the Emperor's agents. He found them to be a 'menace' on the route to Mecca.<sup>23</sup> In a letter to Abdullah Khan Uzbek, 1586, Akbar wrote that he intended 'to undertake extermination of the numerous *Farangi* infidels (Portuguese) who had established themselves on

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<sup>21</sup> Ashin Das Gupta and M.N. Pearson(ed.), *India and the Indian Ocean, 1500-1800*, p.85).

<sup>22</sup> Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, vol.iii, p.275.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, p.275.



the shores of the ocean, the Bay of Bengal, and had created unrest and were oppressing traders and pilgrims to holy places. He intended to go personally to that region so as to clear the place of trouble-makers in view of the news.<sup>24</sup> The Governors of Surat, Khwaja Safar in 1546, organized a naval battle against them and in 1572, Malik Ayaz, tried to control piracy.<sup>25</sup>

For as long as Portuguese naval power was held in esteem, Muqarrab Khan, the Governor of Surat, did not allow the English to establish a Factory at Surat. He also rebuked them for the robbing of ships coming from Red Sea by Henry Middleton and refused to give them any explanation of why he did not let them establish a Factory at Surat.<sup>26</sup> The English started issuing passes to unprotected Indian vessels as early as 1613.<sup>27</sup> As early as 1612, the English started holding Gujarat ships for ransom<sup>28</sup> and claimed that ships could not dare go out the river of Surat without their passes although they also admitted that the transportation of their own goods to Surat was dangerous due to Portuguese frigates.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> *Maktubat-i-Allami (Insha'-i-Abul Fazl)* DAFTAR I, tr. Mansura Haider, Delhi, 1998, P.44.

<sup>25</sup> Badauni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, tr. and ed. George and A. Ranking, N. Delhi, p.150).

<sup>26</sup> *Letters Received*, vol.i, p.279.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, p.30.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*, p.185-86.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, p.307.

They suffered crushing defeat at the hands of English in 1612 and 1614 and plundered four ships engaged in trade in 1613, and seized his mother's ships in 1614 despite the fact that it was carrying a Portuguese pass. Jahangir had to send Muqarrab Khan again to tackle with them.<sup>30</sup> In 1613, the Portuguese organized a raid on the port of Surat and sacked four ships.<sup>31</sup> In retaliation for the Portuguese action Muqarrab Khan got St. Xavier and other Jesuits arrested at Surat in 1614, and closed their churches.<sup>32</sup> Meanwhile, Portuguese were defeated in a naval fight by the English, wherefore they had to approach Muqarrab Khan suing for peace.<sup>33</sup> This victory of English gave them a temporary edge over the Portuguese and next year when they seized a ship of his subjects at Surat, Jahangir debarred Portuguese trade and laid a siege at Daman. English were asked to help against Portuguese. The refusal of English General displeased them but their trade was not stopped.<sup>34</sup> Finally in 1615, Portuguese had to yield to the Mughals and in a truce they had to pay three lakh rupees for the ships taken and license to go to Red Sea.<sup>35</sup> The attempt made by Muqarrab

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<sup>30</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.xxv.

<sup>31</sup> *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, p.125.

<sup>32</sup> *Letters Received*, vol.ii, pp. 96, 107.

<sup>33</sup> *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, p.49.

<sup>34</sup> *Letters Received* iii, p.4.

<sup>35</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.74.

Khan to enlist the support of one European power against another, although unsuccessful initially, became a policy in the coming years.

For safeguarding and furthering English trading interests, Sir Thomas Roe, an ambassador of England who reached Mughal court in 1615, devised a policy of 'force'<sup>36</sup> to enter into the Red Sea trade for which he decided on a three-pronged policy-1) to ask the Mughal for a three-year truce, 2) to blockade and chastise the Portuguese, and, 3) to force Indian merchants to pay to the English as much as they were paying to the Portuguese<sup>37</sup> and start English trade towards Red Sea (which formed a substantial part of Indian merchants' trade) by escorting the Mughal ships and Gujarat ships to Mocha but this was initially refused by the Prince Khurram.<sup>38</sup> He had not failed to understand that Portuguese exercised considerable influence on the western coast<sup>39</sup> and that the Mughal officials had commercial links with them. Roe in 1618 at Ahmedabad wrote to Capt. Pring that Muqarrab Khan and some Mughals freighted from Diu.<sup>40</sup> Roe's proposal to Prince Khurram to let them 'settle' (at Surat) against which he proposed to take the responsibility of naval

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<sup>36</sup> *Letters Received*, vol. vi, pp.227, 229-30.

<sup>37</sup> Roe in a letter in 1618 at Ahmedabad to Company, *EFL*, vol.i, p.15.

<sup>38</sup> *Letters Received*, vol.vi,p.153.

<sup>39</sup> *EFL*, 1618-21,p.12.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*,p.19.

defense of Surat against the Portuguese, was scornfully rejected by Khurram.<sup>41</sup> Apparently any such 'help' which would put the Emperor under any sort of obligation of a foreign European trading Company was unacceptable to him. Roe then decided to 'make them feare to freight in the Portingalls'<sup>42</sup> and this policy does seem to have included piracy despite Roe's alleged attempts to convince his Company men that in the initial stages, they must 'only attempt quiet trade and live only as merchants.'<sup>43</sup> Besides 'stopping the native ships for redressal of their grievances',<sup>44</sup> the English also followed the policy of threatening Portuguese. In 1623, their two ships, *Mauritius* and *Rotterdam* which were returning from Holland attacked Portuguese ships returning from Goa.<sup>45</sup>

The English asserted their maritime supremacy on the conventional methods used earlier by the Portuguese,<sup>46</sup> namely, 1) the system of

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<sup>41</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.27.

<sup>42</sup> *EFI*, 1618-21, p.19.

<sup>43</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.17.

<sup>44</sup> *EFI*, vol.i, p.54, 139.

<sup>45</sup> President Fursland and Council at Batavia to Surat Factory, *EFI*, 1622-23, p.225.

<sup>46</sup> Khafi Khan, however, made a distinction between the nature of piracy of these two European nations. He gave the Portuguese the credit of not attacking those ships which 'have not received their pass,' according to rule, or the ships of Arabia or Muscat, with which two countries they have a long-standing enmity, and they attack each other whenever opportunity offers.' And in this trait, they are not attacking other ships, who attack even those ships which have their pass, Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*. tr. Elliot

licences, as inherited from the Portuguese practice of issuing *cartaz*, according to which any ship sailing western Indian waters without the *cartaz* would be sacked, looted or sunk, and 2) organizing convoys for Indian ships. Just as the Mughals accepted the Portuguese passes, they were willing to tolerate the English passes, as well. In January 1618, Ikhlas Khan, the Captain of the ship *Jahangir* approached Roe and requested him for the safe conduct of his ship to the Red Sea.<sup>47</sup> In November 1619, Bickley's squadron captured a cargo vessel on its way from Lahri Bandar (Sindh) to Persia on the pretext that it carried a Portuguese pass. Asaf Khan at Agra ordered imprisonment of Hughes and Parker—two servants of East India Company at Agra. Sometimes an embargo was placed on their trade. Early in 1617, Alexander Childe, master of 'James', surprised a Surat vessel laden with timber in the Red Sea. It was kept detained for three months. They had to pay compensation for it. The same year, at the request of the Indian merchants the English at Surat, gave passes to the ships of 'Danda Raspoore' for the Red Sea.<sup>48</sup> Soon after the Company's fleet seized yet another ship belonging to a Surat merchant. In 1620, the

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and Dowson, Calcutta, 1877, p.344. In 1635, for example, Cobb, the Captain of a ship licensed Charles I of England, plundered two Mughal vessels at the mouth of Red Sea, though one of them had a pass from the Surat factory. (Biddulph, *Pirates of Malabar*, p.4. cf. J.N. Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb*, vol. v, p. 340).

<sup>47</sup> Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.17.

<sup>48</sup> *EFI*, 1618-21, p.192.

English captured a Portuguese vessel at Jask.<sup>49</sup> Next year, in 1621, the Surat authorities took out money of Prince's junks to satisfy claims against Malik Ambar, for which they were severely punished. They were turned out of the Factory and had to seek refuge with the Dutch. At Ahmedabad and Cambay, Safi Khan laid embargo on goods which the Factors were preparing to send to Surat.<sup>50</sup> The same year, despite a warning by the Prince to President and Council at Surat that they 'should live quietly or else leave,' Prince Khurram's ship arriving from Red Sea was taken.<sup>51</sup> In October 1621, some English pirates sunk an Indian ship which possessed valuable treasures. In March 1622, English Factors appeared before Mohammad Taqi, *Diwan* of the *subah*, to make compensation for the alleged loss. Although they tried to lay the blame on Dutch, they were imprisoned and had to make compensation. Despite these occasional parts of friction and conflict, Anglo-Mughal relations were, in the long term, those of considerable cooperation. Once the dispute subsided, they were permitted to rent any house for the establishment of the factory. They were also allowed to buy or construct four frigates each year, were freed from land tolls, and an arrangement was made by which a sum of 40,000 *mahmudis* was to be paid yearly in lieu of all

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<sup>49</sup> *EFI*, vol.i, p.226.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*, 1622-3, p.xv.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.* vol. i, p.318-19.

custom-dues in Surat, both inwards and outwards.<sup>52</sup> The agreement was sent to the Emperor for confirmation and accordingly a *farman* was received on 7<sup>th</sup> September, 1624.<sup>53</sup> By this agreement, the English were allowed to have access to the Red Sea. They also secured the right to convoy the Mughal junks from Surat to Mocha and back. By 1630, the English fleet at Surat was providing convoys to Indian vessels trading with the Red Sea, such as the *Shahi*.<sup>54</sup> In the Bay of Bengal, the English were providing escort to Indian merchant vessels against the pirates of Aracan and Chatgaon. Despite these attempts to control piracy, the English were always suspected to be involved in piratical activities themselves. The capture of *Taufiqi*, Mirza Mahmud's ship at Surat in 1635 by an English pirate called Roebuck, and *Mahmudi*, a Diu junk by the English pirates led to the imprisonment of some Factors of the East India Company as he was a prominent merchant of Surat and was a broker of Governor of Broach, Yaqub Khan. As the Company's trade expanded, so did their control over maritime trade. In March 1623, Safi Khan and Mohammad Taqi told the English at Ahmedabad that they had received the news that the English were planning to seize King's ship to Mocha and as a preventive measure they wanted a pass. In 1630, three Indian ships

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<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*, 1622-23, p. xxxiii.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, p. 27-30.

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*, 1624-29, p. 49.

were seized, probably on the grounds of non-possession of English licenses. Passes were given to Ali Verdi Beg (skipper) for Samb Cranee (?) for Surat to Mocha and back; for *Masihi* to Trussen Beage(?) bound to Mocha and back, for *Hasani* (Mohammad Abbas) and to *Muniri* (to Sheikh Daud), for *Ahmadi* to Sheikh Ali, two passes to Hafiz Khan for *Salamati* and to Abdel Samad for *Gharib Hafiz* for Gogha and back.<sup>55</sup>

The Mughal response to European piracy was also shaped by the belief that piracy was practiced by all European Companies, more often than not, in consonance with one another.<sup>56</sup> In 1616, Asaf Khan (who was virtually protecting the English Factors at Agra) told Roe that he should endeavour to prevent Dutch from robbing Prince's ship for that would be hazardous not only for the Dutch, but the English, as well.<sup>57</sup> Later in 1622, when native merchants claimed that their ships had been taken off Chaul and demanded compensation, the English tried to blame Dutch but the Mughal officials held them also responsible arguing that they 'shared the booty.'<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*, 1630-33, p.284.

<sup>56</sup> *ibid.*, 1622-23, p.xvi.

<sup>57</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.204.

<sup>58</sup> *EFI*, 1622-23, p.xvi.



While English and Dutch had been earlier proposed separately to convoy the Mughal ships, they were asked in September 1630 by the Mutassadi of Surat, Mir Musa, to collectively convoy *Shahi*, after *Musahi*, which was more richly laden, was captured by Portuguese while returning from Red Sea. Anglo-Dutch efforts to locate it proved fruitless.<sup>59</sup> In November, Mir Musa negotiated peace with the Portuguese who agreed to surrender the ship *Musahi* in return for the release of the goods and men seized by the Indian authorities. The Portuguese secured a promise that as earlier, Indian ships will take Portuguese passes. Aurangzeb also took passes from the Portuguese to be allowed to send off his ships for pilgrimage.<sup>60</sup> Safi Khan in 1623 expressed his wish to make the English ships convoy the junks coming from Red Sea to Gogha for which he had pressurized them by issuing an order by which no Englishman could leave Broach and perhaps they were not allowed to dispatch any goods from there either (because a ship which was detained at Mocha by them-Safi Khan was its overseer and warned them that if Mughal ships were not carried to Gogha, he will 'cut and slice English and Dutch trade into many pieces.'<sup>61</sup> The same year, the English factors alleged that depredations of the Dutch had led to seizure of English warehouse

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<sup>59</sup> *EFI*, 1624-29, p.49.

<sup>60</sup> M.N.Pearson, *The Portuguese in India*, p.27.

<sup>61</sup> *EFI*, 1622-3, p.272.

and their President and factors were jailed for seven months.<sup>62</sup> In 1630, Charles I had sent Captain Quail's Seahorse which committed piracy for which English were held responsible and had to pay compensation.<sup>63</sup> Again, in 1641, the English alleged that their ship Diamond laden with goods for Bantam was stopped by Mughal officials because Danes had seized *Sir-i-Khail's* junk (for injuries received an year before), which led the English to conclude that Mughals had decided upon a policy of collective responsibility whereby if one Christian nation molested a ship, other European nations will also bear the brunt.<sup>64</sup> However, neither the allegation, nor the compensation was slapped on any one or more than one European country without investigation. And it was only for safety of their ships and prevention against piracy that the policy of collective responsibility was considered by the Mughals.

In the seventeenth century, the overseas trade and commercial activity of the members of royal family and nobles such as Nurjahan, Khurram, Muqarrab Khan, Zulfiqar Khan, Saif Khan, Muiz-ul-Mulk etc. had increased, which grew at a faster pace in the latter half seventeenth century in which they mainly took the help of European merchants. Nevertheless, the growth of

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<sup>62</sup> Biddulph, *Pirates of Malabar*, p.2-3. cf. J.N. Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb*, vol. v, p. 340.

<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*, p.3.

<sup>64</sup> *EFI*, 1642-5, p.48.

trade in the Indian Ocean in the latter half of seventeenth century also saw a corresponding increase in the incidents of piracy-most of the pirates being chiefly the English-most notorious among them being Teach, Henry Evory, Kidd, Roberts, England and Tew-who had extended their operations to Indian Ocean, (helped by friends on shore with supplies and information of rich prizes to look for, or armed ships to be avoided,<sup>65</sup> which put a strain on this arrangement. The commercial interests of Prince Khurram had already started to clash with that of European trading companies, specially the East India Company.

Piracy was a sensitive issue for the Mughal state, for it undermined trade and commerce, and indirectly, of course, affected the revenues accruing from trading activities. When an imperial ship was attacked, however, it amounted to an open infringement of sovereign authority. When Mughal Emperor's ship *Ganj-i-Sawat*<sup>66</sup> which was returning from Mocha was (considered the largest vessel of the port of Surat), attacked by a pirate ship called *Fancy* and looted at leisure for many days by Evory, was carried by its crew to Surat on 12<sup>th</sup> September, 1695, it aroused great indignation. Captain Kidd, a notorious pirate based at Madagascar dominated the Indian Ocean at one point of time. His fleet had

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<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*, p.viii-x.

<sup>66</sup> Sahnawaz Khan, *Maathir-ul-Umara*, tr. H. Beveridge, revised, annotated and completed by Baini Prasad, vol.i, p.446.

around 300 men, of whom majority were English men.<sup>67</sup> The victims ascribed the attack to English men closely connected with Bombay. Some of them said that at the time of plunder, they recognized some English men (who were previously known to them).<sup>68</sup> Tremendous pressure prevailed upon the Governor Itimad Khan to punish the English. He therefore sent a party of regular troops under his Lieutenant Ashur Beg to occupy the factory (14 September) and confine the merchants there. Forty-nine English men, including President Annesley and other members of Surat Council, even interlopers like John Vaux and Uphill, who had been expelled from East India Company's service were imprisoned. At Swally, sailors of Benjamin were jailed too. At Broach also, their arms were confiscated and factors imprisoned. Their trade was totally stopped. President Annesley and his colleagues were arrested, and all European trade in the port suspended. Annesley, and Sir John Gayer at Bombay, protested to the Governor and the Emperor, on which the Emperor demanded that the English, Dutch and French should scour the seas in pursuit of the pirates and provide a regular escort for the pilgrim ships making the trip to Mokha, till this demand was satisfied. "European trade would be

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<sup>67</sup> Wright, Arnold *Annesley of Surat*, p.200-1. cf.J.N.Sarkar, History of Aurangzeb, vol. v, p. 352.

<sup>68</sup> Surat Governor's letter to Court, I.O.L. No.26. cf.J.N.Sarkar, History of Aurangzeb, vol. v, p. 352.

stopped and the prisoners detained. Annesley offered to provide an escort for the convoying of pilgrim ships between Surat and Jedda; the port was reopened and prisoners released, and for a time all went well. But the Company's servants soon found the task beyond their powers.<sup>69</sup> Following this incident, in 1695, Itimad Khan introduced the system of convoy to Red Sea. Dutch, English were to detach one or more ships every season to escort the Indian vessels to and from Mocha. These European warships would for the time be in Mughal service and they would be paid according to a fixed rate. For a 'large ship' one thousand *khandies*; the payment for round trip would be Rs. 20,000; for a smaller ship, it would be Rs. 5000. Half the payment was to be borne by the imperial treasury and half the payment was to be borne by the merchant whose ship was to make a trip.<sup>70</sup>

Earlier, in 1691, when a ship belonging to Abdul Ghaffur, prince of Surat merchants was taken by interlopers near Surat (with nine *lakhs* cash on board), the Mughal government placed a guard on the English Factory at Surat and forbade their trade in the

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<sup>69</sup> Das, Harihar *The Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb, 1699-1702*, p.31.

<sup>70</sup> *ibid.*, p.113.

country. But one of the pirate crew having been captured and proved to be a Dane, the embargo was removed.<sup>71</sup>

That the English settlements were vulnerable on the shore was proved by the war between the English and the Mughals at Bengal in 1686. To the counter-effect, the negotiations that followed also proved that the Mughals wanted them to behave well and follow the law of the land and not to stop their trade. (Charnock and his colleagues stirred up a war after being issued a notice to appear before court at Dacca for non-payment of dues amounting to Rs.43,000 to Indian merchants and brokers). During this war, the English asserted their naval supremacy by burning Indian shipping in the docks and seized two vessels belonging to Prince Azam and Shaista Khan as prizes. In the peace that was made in June 1687, the English were allowed to renew trade at Hughli, but after they made fresh war on Mughal shipping on the Bombay coast, Shaista Khan forbade any building at Sutanuti. English under Heath (who had replaced Charnock in Bengal) committed atrocities at Balasore which led the Mughal *faujdar* to seize their Factories and their Bengal establishments suffered a terrible setback. When Aurangzeb (who was then in Golconda) came to know of all this he ordered arrest of all Englishmen,

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<sup>71</sup> Biddulph, *Pirates of Malabar*, p.13. cf. J.N. Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb*, vol. v, p. 347.

occupation of their factories all over his dominions, prohibition of all their trade. But to work out a compromise, Shaista Khan was removed from Bengal in 1688 and (after *Khan-i-Khanan* was placed temporarily) Ibrahim Khan, who was friendly towards the English, was sent to Bengal as a permanent Viceroy. He re-established the Bengal Factory.

In April 1687, following the policy of Josiah Child, Chairman of Company in London of settling in Bombay and withdrawing from Surat, Sir John Child left Surat. This was taken as an act of offence by Mughal Governor of Surat. He put troops around the Factory and soon after, the war began and a force was sent to Swally to seize Child. Child retaliated by blockading the mouth of the river below Surat and then sailing down the coast, captured all sorts of Indian shipping indiscriminately including forty big ships. Meanwhile, the *Siddi* of Janjira, as Mughal Admiral,<sup>72</sup> attacked Bombay in May 1689 and occupied the outlying parts.<sup>73</sup> This war had again proved that while English could assert at Sea, they could be routed at land. *Sidi* made Child desert the fort and marching further, he took possession of fort of Mazagun (and

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<sup>72</sup> *Sidi* Yaqut Khan of Janjira was called Mughal Admiral by the Europeans. Yaqut Khan was not a person, but a title and the holder had to hold the fleet which his *Habshi* clan had built up at Janjira, some way below Bombay, at the service of imperial Government, Ashin Das Gupta, p.27. For details on Sidis, see D.R.Danaji, *Bombay and the Sidis*, Bombay, 1932).

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.* p.339.

made it headquarters and Mahim fort.<sup>74</sup> He also made himself master of Dongri hill, an eminent castle of Bombay, plundered East India House and set it afire.<sup>75</sup> These wars confirmed their respective positions. While English mainly attacked Mughal shipping, Mughals retaliated by stopping their trade on land. English had to confess fault and seek pardon.<sup>76</sup> Aurangzeb pardoned them and sent a *farman* on 4<sup>th</sup> April 1690 restoring their trade on payment of five of Rs.150,000 and restoring goods of Indian ships. However, Aurangzeb's callous attitude can be judged from his statement that the Christians were the 'Lions of the Sea,' saying that God has allotted unstable element for their rule.<sup>77</sup>

Around this time, a number of pirates of European nations had also joined piracy. From the English sources, it is evident that the pirates of other nationalities (specially the interlopers, i.e. merchants of the new English Company) had also joined in. In 1691, the Bombay Council, while writing to London that trade was being greatly hampered by the large number of pirates along the coast, also stated that the European pirates came from all nations

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<sup>74</sup> Alexander Hamilton, *A New Account of The East Indies*, 2 Vols., ed. W. Foster, (London, 1930), p.217-18.

<sup>75</sup> Burnell, John *Bombay in the Days of Queen Anne*, pp.19,32.

<sup>76</sup> Alexander Hamilton, *A New Account of The East Indies*, p.224.

<sup>77</sup> John Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia being Nine Years' Travels, 1672-81*, London, 1909-15. vol i p 302



and nationalities: English, Dutch, French, Danes etc.<sup>78</sup> and sailed under English colours for which they were held responsible and made to pay compensation.<sup>79</sup> While its possibility cannot be wholly ruled out, the allegation of it being a frequent case is most certainly an exaggeration as while the different European nations traded differently they often worked in consonance. At times, various pirates on a single ship were of different nationalities. In 1684, six Europeans, four of them being English and other Dutch, begged passage in a Persian merchants' richly laden ship bound for India and in Gulf of Persia, killed the owners and looted the ship.<sup>80</sup> In 1689 rovers from West Indies arrived.<sup>81</sup> English President at Bombay, Gayer is also said to have handed over six French pirates to Itimad Khan,<sup>82</sup> in Gulf of Cambay. French squadron was working four pirate ships from New York imposed a loss of four *lakh* rupees for native ships; interlopers also captured ships while East India Company servants also joined them e.g. *Mocha* and *Josiah* crew mutinied and joined the notorious pirate Kidd.<sup>83</sup> The English and the Dutch were more vulnerable and contradictorily,

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<sup>78</sup> *The Gazetteer of Bombay City and Island*, vol. ii, Bombay, 1609, p.85.

<sup>79</sup> Biddulph, *Pirates of Malabar*, p.5-6. cf.J.N.Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb*, vol. v, p. 347.

<sup>80</sup> Orme Mss.117, p.291.

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*, p.11.

<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*, p.29.

<sup>83</sup> *ibid.*, p.34.

more successful than the Portuguese because they traded deep into the interior.<sup>84</sup> In case the ship of a prominent merchant was looted at sea, they prevailed upon the Governor to demand restitution and protection of their ships naturally because more than anything else, it was a monetary loss and safety to them. In 1691, Abdul Ghaffur's ship was taken at the mouth of Surat which had nine *lakh* rupees cash on board, supposedly by the Danish pirates. Initially, embargo was placed on English trade but finding them innocent, it was lifted. Two plundered vessels of Abdul Ghaffur, *Karimi* and *Ahmadi* turned up ashore two days after they had disappeared. The *nakhuda* (captain) of the ship *Karimi* reported that pirates had put both the ships on fire, in which six men were injured, and Rs.500,000 worth in bullion all in Spanish *rial* were ferried across to the pirate ship,<sup>85</sup> and of this sum, 4 *lakhs* belonged to Ghaffur. Itimad Khan summoned Dutch Council and interrogated Van Ommen. He replied that the testimony against them was dubious since the Indians called all the Europeans 'hat-wearers' which confused the issue. Itimad Khan proposed that each of the three European Companies would send one ship to search for the pirates. But on 20 September 1692, Van Omen declined help by saying that

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<sup>84</sup> Ashin Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat c. 1700-1750*, (New Delhi, 1994), p.36.

<sup>85</sup> Ashin Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat c. 1700-1750*, p.110.

they had no extra ship for the purpose.<sup>86</sup> The next year, two of Ghaffur's ships, *Fez Rasan* and *Fatehi*, were attacked off Bab al Mandeb, by an English pirate, Thomas Tew and his total loss was of two and a half lakh rupees. Another merchant, Sheikh Hamidi's ship *Ahmadi* also fell to pirates and his total loss was of eight and a half lakh rupees.<sup>87</sup> In 1694, pirate Henry Evory's ship *Fancy* with forty-six guns and 150 men captured *Fath Muhammadi* of Abdul Ghaffur.<sup>88</sup> In 1698, Chivers captured a fine ship with a cargo worth 14 lakhs belonging to Hassan Hamidan, a merchant of Jeddah and Surat.<sup>89</sup> On 12 Jan. 1699, order from Emperor to 'squeeze English, Dutch and French' so that they pay compensation to Hasan Hamidan and others robbed by European pirates. They were asked to either undertake to pay compensation in future or leave Mughal Empire. European Factors had to sign the undertaking. The Indian Ocean was divided into zones among the three companies- the French were given the Persian Gulf, the Dutch 'the Arab coast from Muscat to Jedda; and the English 'the South' which took in the West coast of Indian and Indonesia area. The idea was that they would be responsible for the piracies committed in their areas and if piracy is committed in their area, either they would capture the

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<sup>86</sup> *ibid.*, p.111.

<sup>87</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> J.N. Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb*, 5 vols., (Calcutta, 1912-24), vol. v, p.343.

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.*, p.352.

pirates or pay money. On 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb.1698, Kidd captured *Quedah Merchant*, 400 tons, bound from Bengal to Surat with a rich cargo worth 4 lakhs of rupees belonging to Mukhlis Khan, one of the great nobles of the Mughal Empire. Its Captain was an Englishman, gunner was French, 2 Dutchman and therefore all three nations were held responsible for this piracy.<sup>90</sup> In August, Emperor ordered that all three nations should pay total damages amounting to 14 *lakhs*. A guard was placed on the English factory and they had to pay 2 *lakh* rupees as compensation. Gayer refused payment offered to furnish convoys for Mocha as he had already done before (Gayer offered Mughal Emperor to give them 4 *lakh* per year-the same amount was being given to Sidi.of Janjira for convoying Red Sea fleet but he had been clearly unable to save Indian ships from European desperadoes.<sup>91</sup> Dutch had similarly asked for a monopoly of trade in Mughal Empire in lieu of convoying Red Sea fleet. But both these offers had been rejected by the Emperor as he realized that neither any one European nation was involved in piracy, nor any one nation could guard against all other equally powerful pirates. The Dutch threatened to abandon trade than pay damages. But they signed bonds to suppress piracy

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<sup>90</sup> Biddulph, *Pirates of Malabar*, p.50-51. J.N. Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb*, vol. v, p.352.

<sup>91</sup> *ibid.*, p.29.

and jointly engage to make good all future losses.<sup>92</sup> According to the terms of agreement, “the Dutch convoyed the Mecca pilgrims and patrolled entrance to Red Sea, besides paying 70,000 to the Governor of Surat, the English paid Rs.30,000 and patrolled South Indian Seas, while the French made a similar payment and policed the Persian Gulf.<sup>93</sup> In 1699, February, Amanat Khan forced the English, Dutch and French to sign *muchalkas* (agreements), giving a guarantee to protect and convoy the Mughal ships, and to make good all losses from piracy.<sup>94</sup> A few months later, one of the best ships belonging to Husain Hamidan— armed with fifty guns and manned by three hundred men "was taken off St. Johns by three pirates on her voyage from Jidda. (The pirate crews were said to have received £ 800 per man).<sup>95</sup> Unfortunately for the English, the Governor, Itimad Khan, a man of indisputable probity, and a firm friend to the English died and had been succeeded by Amanat Khan in May 1697. The new Governor issued orders that no one should be permitted to leave the town, that no provisions should be taken to the English ships, and that all sea-borne traffic should be stopped. The Emperor commanded Nawab Asad Khan to issue a *parwana* to the Governor of Surat. In this document Aurangzeb

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<sup>92</sup> *ibid.*, p.53.

<sup>93</sup> *ibid.*, p.53.

<sup>94</sup> Manucci, Niccolao *Storia Do Mogor, 1656-1712*, vol.iii, p.464.

<sup>95</sup> Das, Harihar *The Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb, 1699-1702*, p.34.

emphasized the losses inflicted on Indian merchants by the pirates pointed to the ineffectiveness of the English to convoy ships in affording protection; and ordered the Governor to bring pressure upon the English, Dutch and French to make them pay compensation to the Emperor's subjects. He declared that unless written guarantees were given that the piracies should stop, no more Englishmen, Dutchmen and Frenchmen would be allowed to dwell and trade in his dominions.<sup>96</sup>

The Governor of Surat, acting on the Emperor's order, presented the three European nations with an ultimatum demanding compensation for the losses sustained from the pirates, and an undertaking to clear the seas and provide convoys for pilgrim ships. The Mughal subjects were forbidden to have any dealing with Europeans by proclamation accompanied by beat of drum throughout the city, and a guard was set over the factories. The Dutch and French were quick to come to terms with the Mughal authorities. Both paid sums of money to the Governor and signed guarantees for the safe navigation of the Gulf of Mokha, and the Gulf of Persia respectively. Amanat Khan now demanded that the English should give similar security for the Southern Indian Seas, from the Coast of Coromandel and Bengal as far as Sumatra and Java. President Annesley and his Council asked for time to obtain

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<sup>96</sup> *ibid.*, p.34.

instructions from Sir John Gayer at Bombay. Gayer, on being apprised of the seriousness of the situation, sailed for Sualí Bar with a small fleet and arrived there on January 11, 1699. He advised Annesley not to make the payment demanded by the Governor, and not to give the guarantee for the safety of the Southern Seas. He pointed out that the English had furnished convoys for two years and would willingly do so for a third year, and that England alone among the European nations concerned was sending men-of-war to extirpate the pirates. He declared himself quite ready to discuss the subject with the Mughal's representative. Nevertheless, he avoided a personal meeting with the governor. The delay and hesitation on the part of the English in giving the required security made the Governor furious, and he immediately, sent several hundred soldiers to blockade the factory, threatening the inmates with death. These strong measures caused Annesley to bring the whole question up for discussion at a general council, and it was decided that a guarantee should be given similar to those offered the English and the French. Thus "the dull unthinking English" (as Sir Nicholas Waite called them in a letter to the Directors) undertook heavier responsibilities than their European rivals. The Portuguese, whose sea-borne trade had almost ceased to exist, were not included in the arrangement. Next, the Emperor demanded that the Europeans should recompense Husain Hamidan

and other merchants for the losses they had suffered. The Mughal Governor however explained to him that the European Companies at Surat could not be held liable for this, as the pirates were "hat-men of all nations", acknowledging the authority of no sovereign. Gayer and his colleagues trusted that the guarantee given by the English would satisfy Aurangzeb. But their fortunes at Surat had reached their lowest ebb; their trade had been almost extinguished, and at this critical moment Annesley was replaced on May 13, 1698 by Stephen Colt, his junior in Council. President Colt found himself at once confronted with the greatest obstacle to the success of the embassy of Sir William Norris. Mukhlis Khan had already been compensated, which had enabled President Colt to stave off any additional claims and to soften the rigorous measures, of the Governor by secretly bribing the subordinate Mughal officials. The discovery of these transactions made the London Company seem to the principal merchants of Surat to be themselves pirates, and also strengthened the demands of Husain Hamidan. When Diyanat Khan became Governor of Surat, the question of the claim was renewed. Sir John Gayer refuted the charge of piracy and appealed to the Emperor, as well as Diyanat Khan, not to believe the allegations without making full enquiry. He asked Diyanat Khan to use his authority to prevent any disturbance to the Company's trade at the port. The Emperor's orders, however, were imperative



regarding the satisfaction of Husain Hamidan's claims. President Colt emphatically denied any responsibility for these, as it was not possible for him to meet the demand without consulting the authorities in London.<sup>97</sup> The result was the arrest and imprisonment of Sir John Gayer and others of the London Company.

The prospect of a settlement seemed remote on account of a strong representation made to the Emperor that in spite of repeated orders the Company had not yet discharged its debts. It was further complicated, at this juncture, by the fact that an English ship; supposed to belong to the London Company, had captured one of Abdul Ghafur's ships, sailing from Mokha, and three other ships carrying considerable sums of money. In December, 1701, acting upon instructions, Diyanat Khan seized some of the Company's factors at Surat, forbade the entry of all provisions, and confiscated goods amounting to over Rs. 140,000. These were given to Abdul Ghaffur as part of the compensation for losses incurred through the pirates. The claims of Husain Hamidan had yet to be satisfied. On 23 September, 1701, Abdul Ghaffur's ship was plundered and two other ships went missing. The Dutch pleaded that they had broken the convoy and hence the Dutch were not liable to give compensation. A long tussle ensued over the issue, but the Dutch

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<sup>97</sup> *ibid.*, p.36.

refused compensation.<sup>98</sup> In February, 1702, Prince Sultan Muhammad Azim-us-Shan, Viceroy of Bengal, attacked the Company's settlements at Patna, Rajmahal and Kasimbazar, property was seized, but the embargo on all European trade, in Bengal was afterwards withdrawn. Acting on the same order, the Nawab Da'ud Khan appeared with a large force in the vicinity of Fort St. George. Governor Thomas Pitt had already served information of his approach through spies, and took apt measures to defend the weak settlement. He protested against the charge of piracy, pointing out to Da'ud that the security-bond extorted from the three European nations at Surat did not apply to his own settlement. Nevertheless, Da'ud besieged fort for three months, inflicting great loss on the Company's trade and revenue. At first he demanded an exorbitant sum, but Governor Pitt agreed to pay him Rs.20,000 and another 5,000 to Muhammad Said, his *diwan*, or revenue collector, the siege was then raised, and full liberty to trade was granted as before. Daud on his part made reparation to the English for damage done. It is clear that the incidents of piracy were growing steadily in the last quarter of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and in the same measure, frictions and wars between the Europeans, specially the English, were also growing. The importance of the issue can be judged from the fact that when the New East India

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<sup>98</sup> *ibid.*, p.115.

Company sent an ambassador to acquaint Mughal Emperor of 'formation of a new "English Company trading to the East Indies; to request granting of such settlement for its factories; and such immunities and privileges as might be necessary for security and protection of Company's agents and redress of their grievances; seek privileges equal to those enjoyed by other Europeans, it had to impress upon the Mughal king their seriousness in dealing with the issue of piracy, which was admitted even by the English King.

One of the instructions given to Norris on his appointment by king William the Third, (King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland) on 31 Dec.1698, was to inform the Mughal king of efforts of King of England to suppress piracy.<sup>99</sup> In a letter addressed to the Mughal King, he wrote that he was 'sending squadron of war ships (to end piracy) along with the embassy.<sup>100</sup> And it was precisely on the issue of piracy that the Norris embassy sent by New English Company (established at Surat on 8<sup>th</sup> April, 1699), from 27<sup>th</sup> January 1701-18 April 1702) could not succeed. There had been regular reports of piracy in the Indian Ocean and while Emperor Aurangzeb continued to insist firmly on a guarantee for security for sea, and demanded an undertaking by the English to clear pirates from the seas as a price for a *farman*, the ambassador Norris was

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<sup>99</sup> *ibid.*, p.77.

<sup>100</sup> *ibid.*, p.82-84.

equally emphatic in refusal as he knew it to be an impossible task.<sup>101</sup>

The collective guarantee or joint convoys made the Indian shipping even more dependent on the European Companies, even while not making them free from piracy. In 1701, Hussain Hamidan's ship which was reportedly not following the convoy to Mocha provided by Dutch and English was taken by the pirates and although English pleaded innocence, Governor set guards on the Factory and debarred all their correspondence with Europeans or natives from all conveniences because he demanded 300,000 from them to pay to Hussain Hamidan.<sup>102</sup> In reply to which the English sent a *Roca* to Governor on 13 Jan. 1701/2 saying that there was no proof of their involvement and accusing him of having fraudulently taken Rs.235,000 for Abdul Ghaffur of his loss of Rs.182,000 which he says was robbed by pirates in straits of Malacca and now Rs.300,000 were being demanded for Hussain Hamidan.<sup>103</sup> The Governor rejected this *Roca*. The English Company men then took the matter to principal merchants of Surat, who advised them to ask Dutch to pay half the money as they were involved too.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> *ibid.*, p.311.

<sup>102</sup> k(i), *Surat Factory Diaries*, India Office Records, London, No.3(org.) 7 Jan.1701/2. I am grateful to Dr. Farhat Hasan for this reference.

<sup>103</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> *ibid.*, 16 Jan., 1701/02.

However, the strict attitude of Mughal Government led them to heavily compensate for the losses made. This strict attitude was evident in the first decade of eighteenth century. On 28<sup>th</sup> August, 1703, two ships of Surat, one belonging to Abdul Ghaffur and another to Qasim Khan, when returning from Mokha were captured by pirates off Surta. Following this, the Governor Itibar Khan, seized all Indian brokers of European Companies cut their food supply and all communication from outside. Two *lakh* rupees were recovered from the brokers (Vithhal and Keshav Parekh) of old East India Company and three *lakhs* more from brokers of the Dutch.<sup>105</sup> From October 1703 to February 1704, Dutch blockaded the port of Surat until guards were withdrawn from their factory on 15<sup>th</sup> March. They also captured a rich vessel bringing Indian pilgrims back from Mecca, some of which even Aurangzeb venerated, and in return of their ship, they asked Governor of Surat to repay the money that he had forcibly taken from them<sup>106</sup> as an indemnity-bond. While the Governors of Surat were encouraging piracy by these coercive methods, Aurangzeb disapproved of their policy. He removed Itibar Khan and installed Nejabat Khan in his place. By an imperial order received on 8<sup>th</sup> March, 1704, he also rejected the agreement made by Amanat Khan in Feb. 1699 which

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<sup>105</sup> Jadunath Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb*, vol.v, p.356-7.

<sup>106</sup> Niccolao Manucci, *Storia Do Mogor. 1656-1712* vol iv p 62-3

bound them to convoy all Indian ships and make good all losses arising out of any act of piracy and instead asked the Surat merchants to give a written discharge of all their claims on Europeans.<sup>107</sup> He also forbade Nejabat Khan to take indemnity bonds from the Europeans in future.<sup>108</sup> In December 1704, Dutch Council made claims to cancel *muchalka* and a new *farman* was issued to free them from all claims.<sup>109</sup> This was perhaps the first time when peace was concluded on terms dictated by a European power precisely because there was no other option.

European maritime dominance was a source of considerable irritation for the Mughal rulers and officials, but they had come to accept the necessity of obtaining passes for their ships. This did indeed amount to an infringement of sovereignty-a recognition of the weakness of an imperial authority-but the system of passes was never quite considered as an acceptance by the Mughals of the power and strength of the Europeans. In Mughal perception, European maritime dominance was often equated with piracy, and this allowed them to de-legitimate European assertions of political authority. European maritime dominance co-existed in Mughal imperial consciousness with their political marginalization. They

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<sup>107</sup> *ibid.*, vol.iii, p.487-91.

<sup>108</sup> Hamiduddin Khan, *Ahkam-i-Alamgiri*, edited and translated by J .N. Sarkar, Calcutta, 1949, 17a. J.N. Sarkar, *History of Aurangzeb*, vol.v, p.357.

<sup>109</sup> Manucci, Niccolao *Storia Do Mogor. 1656-1712* vol iv p 142

were still considered as inferior and subordinate to the land-based empires in Asia, and their dominance over the seas was, in Mughal perception, no more than an instance of piracy-a willingness to engage in plunder and violence for quick profits. That the European maritime dominance reflected their technological superiority, as also a better-developed political system, was an insight that was lost on the consciousness and perception of the Mughals in India.

## **CHAPTER VII:**

### **Fiscal policy of Mughals towards the European merchants**



## Fiscal policy of Mughals towards the European merchants

The European merchants were anxious to secure concessions in taxation from the Mughal state. They desired to obtain these concessions on the basis of their alleged superior status, as representatives of the sovereign of England. This chapter explores the Mughal fiscal policy, and the assumptions informing that policy, towards the European merchants.

Like other traders, Portuguese merchants paid custom-duties and the final decisions regarding the fiscal administration rested with the Mughal Emperor. After Akbar occupied the port cities of Surat, Broach and Cambay, some Portuguese merchants at Cambay sought from him the special favour of exempting them from the obligation of paying custom-duties for the commodities imported into Cambay by them. Akbar granted the request and reportedly agreed to take the lumpsum payment of 300,000 *cruzados* every year instead as duties to the captain of Cambay.<sup>1</sup> In the beginning of seventeenth century, the English East India Company began to trade on the west coast in the Mughal Empire. They wanted the written assurance of Mughal Emperor allowing them safe and free trade. In 1612 they claimed that the Mughal king had permitted them 'free trade' and allowed them to settle factories. (In 1612, Thomas Kerridge wrote to East India Company from Surat that Governor of Ahmedabad came to Surat to buy commodities for king with an order of the king to permit them free trade and settle factories and on 20<sup>th</sup> February, they received another *firman* of the

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<sup>1</sup> Diogo de Carto, *Da Asia, Decada IX* Lisboa, 1786, Part 1, pp.64-87. Cf. K.S. Mathew, *Akbar and Portuguese Maritime Dominance, Akbar and His India*, p.259.

king written to the Governor of Ahmedabad.<sup>2</sup> Factors at Surat wrote to EIC on Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, 1616, that Capt Keeling procured King's *firman* confirming their fair usage, free trade (The free trade repeatedly demanded by EIC and confirmed by the Mughal king, prince or local officials only meant 'allowing' of trade and charging legal imperial and local taxes) and continuance of commerce by factories.

However, when Thomas Roe, the ambassador of King of England, came to India in 1615, the EIC was still looking for a secure footing in India and trading concessions to enhance their trade and make it more profitable. In 1616, Roe claimed to have got two *firmans* (*nishans*) from Prince Khurram authorizing the English residence at Surat and their free passage inland, ordering redress for abuses they had suffered.<sup>3</sup> In 1616, Roe complained in a letter to Lucas Antheunis at Masulipatam of abuses and extortions and of trade being unsettled.<sup>4</sup> Later he claimed to have procured a grant (?) giving privileges such as free trade and abolition of abuses in levying of customs.<sup>5</sup> On Oct. 25<sup>th</sup> 1617, Roe wrote to Kerridge that he was sending him Prince's *firman* (*nishan*) confirming good usage, allowing loading of ships without custom.<sup>6</sup> Later, on Jan 2<sup>nd</sup> 1636, President Methwold and Council at Surat

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<sup>2</sup> *Letter Received*, vol. ii, p.256.

<sup>3</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.xxxvii.

<sup>4</sup> *Letter Received*, vol. iv., p.143.

<sup>5</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.liii-iv.

<sup>6</sup> *Letter Received*, vol. vi, p.215.

wrote to the Company that they had received a *parwana* from Asaf Khan regarding free trade unto his port of Lahari-Bandar.<sup>7</sup>

The European merchants had to work according to the trading norms and taxation rates which were revisable, whenever the emperor would deem it necessary. The time, mode of payment and method of collection was at the discretion of Provincial Governor. The repeated allusions in letters written by the factors to the Company to abuses in levying of customs refer to overcharging of customs. In July 1616, factors at Surat complained to Roe of over-charging of custom-tax from them (5% instead of 3½%).<sup>8</sup> In 1639, Asaf Khan remitted nearly half of 'those extraordinary' customs in Bandar Lahiri (Henry Bornford in his journey from Agra to Thatta, March 1639).<sup>9</sup> Tax exemptions were given for a specific period, if the situation arose, to one and all, whether they were foreign or indigenous merchants. If they suffered losses in any year, they could pay after a year. In 1670 and during the preceding 70 years, the English paid customs by a conventional agreement with the port officials not in ready money but an 'year after.'<sup>10</sup> Tax-payment was also adjustable in their routine purchase of goods on individual basis. In 1657 Revington, an official of East India Company, sold a number of guns to the *Mutasaddi* of Surat under the agreement that a part of the purchase money should be deducted annually out of the sum to be paid as customs.<sup>11</sup> The Dutch, through yet another conventional agreement with the

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<sup>7</sup> *EFI*, 1634-36, p.139.

<sup>8</sup> *Letters Received*, vol.ii, p.5.

<sup>9</sup> *EFI*, 1637-41, p.137.

<sup>10</sup> Fawcett, Charles (ed.), *The English Factories in India* (New Series), (Oxford, 1954), p.199.

<sup>11</sup> *EFI*, 1661-64, pp.12-13.

*Mutasaddis* of Surat used to pay tax on their imports in 'goods',<sup>12</sup> also ends with a complaint of delay in payment.<sup>13</sup> At one time the English Factors reported:

'As you have seen the Nabob [Muqarrab Khan] by the hand of one man to buy all the trifles amongst the common people of the ships so you shall do well to remember to give advice that no man bring any of their things to land, which will procure great troubles and delays to die main business.'<sup>14</sup>

According to a general report, French envoys at Agra promised Emperor presents to a value of Rs.30,000 in foreign rarities, and undertook to give Jafar Khan Rs.10,000 and to other nobles a similar sum. Allegedly, by these means they obtained a *farman* for trade, with permission to hire a house in Surat and to pay only 2% as custom-duties.<sup>15</sup> Dutch succeeded in obtaining from Subahdar Azam Khan of Bengal a formal permission to establish a factory at Hughli and trade anywhere in the province subject to the payment of customs duty. The rate of this duty was to be determined by Mir Kamaluddin Haji Jamal, probably an intermediary between the Company and the government, in consultation with other merchants.

The discretionary powers of the Mughal provincial governors influenced the manner in which the imperial policies were implemented. This discretion facilitated the development of mutually beneficial adjustments between the officials and English merchants. In some measure, this discretion also arose from the

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<sup>12</sup> The last entry in *English Factories in India 1624-29*, ed. Foster, p. 271.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 151, 241.

<sup>14</sup> *Letters Received*, vol.iii, p. 3.

lack of any clear guidelines from the Emperor, since there were no set and different rules of taxation for the foreign merchants. Imperial guidelines were outlines, details of custom collection were done by the port authorities.

However, the Emperor was to be the main arbiter in case any dispute regarding fiscal administration arose. Customs-post (*chowki*) at Swally was established towards the beginning of seventeenth century.<sup>16</sup> Disputes on jurisdiction over the Swally customs between the *shiqdar* of Olpar (who was alleging that the port of Swally belonged to his *pergana*) and the *mutasaddi* of Surat ultimately resulted in the English and the Dutch having to pay customs at both Swally and Surat.<sup>17</sup> When the English petitioned to the emperor Jahangir against the abuse of Surat customs, he issued a *farman* on 16 Dec. 1626 ordering that the authorities of Olpar should desist from realizing customs from the English at Swally, for the legitimate claim to the revenues of Swally belonged to the *mutasaddi* of Surat.<sup>18</sup>

The European merchants had to pay all taxes which were charged from indigenous merchants. One of the taxes was boat tax. It seems to have been a legal tax. Justinian Offley at Broach wrote to Surat factory that freight to Swally road would be 50 *mahmudis*

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<sup>15</sup> *EFI*, 1665-67, P.281.

<sup>16</sup> B.N.Suppl.Persian 482. ff.121(a)-122(a). cf.Farhat Hasan, *State and Locality in Mughal India: Power Relations in Western India*, c.1572-1730, CUP, (Delhi, 2006), p.115.

<sup>17</sup> President Kerridge at Surat to the Company, 6 feb.1627 and Jan.1628; O.C.numbers,1250 and 1264. cf.Farhat Hasan, *State and Locality in Mughal India: Power Relations in Western India*, c.1572-1730, CUP, (Delhi, 2006), p.115.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*

per boat (to carry 1000 *maunds* of goods).<sup>19</sup> In the time of Emperor Akbar, the boat tax was same as *zakat*, i.e. 1/40<sup>th</sup> of the value of merchandise from merchants. Jahangir had abolished *zakat* and on every laden boat, half a sir of white sugar (*nabat*) was realized in kind, while empty boats were let pass. During Shahjahan's period, in first term of Shamshir Khan, price of 1 *ser* sugar (10 Muradi *tankahs*) was levied on every laden boat, which was then doubled to 20 *tankahas*. During his second term, 1 rupee was charged from every laden boat.<sup>20</sup>

In a *farman* dated 5<sup>th</sup> Mah Di Elahi, 3<sup>rd</sup> r.y. of Shahjahan (1630 A.D.) sent a warning to a Raja through a letter 'it was reported to Emperor by *Waqia Nawis* that he was exacting illegal sums from merchants coming Bengal and Orissa and charging Re.1 per load of merchandise and Rs.300 for a boat for *manzil* (stage).'<sup>21</sup> Another cess mentioned in the Persian sources is *naul*.<sup>22</sup> It was a cess on the freight-goods of the merchants, seems to have been an authorized cess sanctioned by the court. The rate at which it was collected or the amount that was realized from it is not mentioned in the sources, but probably it was not considerable.<sup>23</sup>

Transit dues on road tolls (*rahdari*) were, perhaps, the most regular and relatively burdensome. Its rate and size varied from place to place and indeed from person to person assessed. The

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<sup>19</sup> *EFI*, 1622-23, P.261.

<sup>20</sup> Mirak, Yusuf *Mazhar-i-Shahjahani*, 8 vols., (Karachi, 1961), p.224.

<sup>21</sup> *Some Farmans, Sanads and Parwanas (1578-1802)*, ed. K.K.Datta, Basta no.69, Purnea collection, p. 46.

<sup>22</sup> for *naul* see Bib.Nat.suppl.Pers.482, ff. 36(b),135(a),183(a). cf. Farhat Hasan, *State and Locality in Mughal India: Power Relations in Western India, c.1572-1730*, p.111.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid*.

English found it harsh and complained throughout. The court issued orders, one after the other, forbidding its exaction from the English e.g. in 1637,<sup>24</sup> but with not apparently much lasting effects. In 1650, Shahjahan issued an imperial order (*farman*) in favor of the English Company exempting them from transit-dues (*rahdari*). Khafi Khan wrote candidly of its blatant over-exaction from merchants by the local elite. He wrote, 'The *rahdari* in particular is condemned by the righteous and just men as a most vexatious impost, and oppressive to travellers, but a large sum is raised by it.'<sup>25</sup> In most parts of the imperial territories the *fauj-dars* and *jagirdars*, by force and tyranny, now exact more than ever from the traders and poor and necessitous travelers. The zamindars also, seeing that no enquiries are made, extort more on roads within their boundaries than is collected on roads under royal officers. By degrees matters have come to such a pass, that between the time of leaving the factory or port and reaching their destination, goods and merchandise pay double their cost price in tolls.'<sup>26</sup> A royal order was issued on 4th Shawwal, 1075 by Aurangzeb in respect of land custom which in *subas*, cities and *parganas* of the empire and jurisdiction of revenue offices collected by government.

<sup>24</sup> B.N.Sloane 409(A)ff.12-13; B.M.Addl.24039,f.2(b)1638(ibid.,f.2),1640 (B.N.Suppl. Pers.ff.24(a)-24(b))and 1650 (*EFI*,1646-50,P.71). cf. Farhat Hasan, *State and Locality in Mughal India: Power Relations in Western India, c.1572-1730*, p.118.

<sup>25</sup> A reporter wrote to his brother from Lauhi (that) "The tolls on merchants and travellers bring Rs.15000 to Rs.16000 every year but district treasurer and police officer do not send to royal treasury more than Rs.1000 or Rs.2000. This is not *rah-dari* but *rah-zani*. (*Ruka'at-i-Alamgiri*, tr. J.H.Billimoria, Delhi,1972, Letter LI (i.e. no.51), P.52.

<sup>26</sup> Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab ul Lubab*, vol. ii, p.87.

Differences in levy of taxation were also reported to His Majesty 'from 1st of Shawwal, 8th regnal year, octroi of 1/40th from a Muslim, 2/40th from a Hindu according to the price of the article. Articles of price less than Rs.55 ½ were not to be taxed. At the time of outgoings of merchants' goods and merchandize from cities and towns nothing should be charged as tolls were exempted.'<sup>27</sup> Aurangzeb issued another royal farman on 22 Muharram 16 r.y. in which he ordered that road-toll which *jagirdars* formerly collected from merchants was not to be collected.'<sup>28</sup> Rahdari had been abolished in second year of his reign, while 'benevolences' and forced presents were condemned in the general order abolishing *abwabs* issued on 29<sup>th</sup> April, 1673. 'The forcing of goods' by his grandson Azim us Shan called for censures by Aurangzeb (*Sauda-i-Khas*).<sup>29</sup> The illegal taxes were collected even from the indigenous merchants since their collection had become customary and the European merchants were given as much protection from illegal cesses as the indigenous merchants. From the beginning, the illegal taxes which were being collected from other merchants began to be realized from the English merchants also, against which Roe thought it necessary to get relief in written terms of agreement in form of imperial order. In 1618, Roe took an undertaking on behalf of English.<sup>30</sup> The *nishan* of Prince Khurram said that the English shall pay the dues and customs already agreed upon. According to the negotiations between Roe and Khurram, the

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<sup>27</sup> Ali Mohammad Khan, *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, tr. M.F. Lokhandwala, Baroda, 1965, p.230.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*, p.256.

<sup>29</sup> Sarkar, Jadunath *History of Aurangzeb*, vol.v, p.323.

<sup>30</sup> Foster, W. (ed.) Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p.513.



latter agreed to let the English buy and sell according to their own will; abuses in custom house were to be reformed; no duty was to be levied on jewels and precious stones; no tolls to be demanded on the way to and from the port,<sup>31</sup> gifts were to be duty-free, but if they were sold then duty was to be charged.<sup>32</sup>

The European merchants were given as much protection from illegal cesses as the indigenous merchants, but the collection of some illegal levies seems to have become a convention which remained functional even after repeated imperial directions against them. *Haq-i-langar* (anchorage dues) was an illegal cess laid on the ships when they arrived at the port.<sup>33</sup> There is not much information regarding this tax. It was prohibited by the imperial court, but nevertheless exacted by the port officials. The rate at which this tax was collected or the amount that was realized from it, is not mentioned in the sources, but probably it varied from place to place.<sup>34</sup> From documents that relate to Bengal and Orissa, it appears that orders were repeatedly issued commanding the port officials (*mutasaddis*) not to exact *haq-i-langar* from the English it being an illegal cess, but in most cases these orders were quite

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<sup>31</sup> OC.678; cf. Foster, W. (ed.) Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe, 1615-19*, p. liii-iv.

<sup>32</sup> *EFI*, vol. i, p. 39.

<sup>33</sup> For references to *haq-i-langar* see British Museum, Addl. 24039, ff. 7, 11, 17. cf. Farhat Hasan, *State and Locality in Mughal India: Power Relations in Western India, c. 1572-1730*, p. 111.

<sup>34</sup> Bib. Nat. suppl. Pers. 482, ff. 36(b), 135(a), 183(a). cf. Farhat Hasan, *State and Locality in Mughal India: Power Relations in Western India, c. 1572-1730*, p. 111.

ineffective.<sup>35</sup> Streynsham Master referred to a *nishan* by Sultan Shuja (son of Shahjahan) (given in August 1651 was founded upon a *farman* procured by David-ge from Emperor a year earlier given to James Bridgman)<sup>36</sup> which prohibited the arbitrary charging of anchorage dues (*haq-i-langar*).<sup>37</sup> A levy of 4% was put on all English exports, besides anchorage dues on their ships.<sup>38</sup> The Dutch were also paying 4% duty on all traffic,<sup>39</sup> anchorage dues were legally payable by all merchants including the English, they were only given exemption from any illegal cesses except the anchorage. A *farman* supposedly given to Dutch in 1662 by Shah Aurangzeb reiterates the same. According to this *farman*, the Dutch were allowed to bring their ships to the ports of Hughli, Pipli and Balasore and were exempted from payment of any other duty at these three places after paying anchorage (*haq-i-langar*).<sup>40</sup>

Goods that once paid the custom duty were formally exempted from all other cesses or levies. This included the *zakat* (a cess on sale and purchase of commodities). A *nishan* by Sultan Shuja ( given in August 1651) to James Bridgman, also prohibited

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<sup>35</sup> B.M.Addl.24039, ff.7,11,17. cf. Farhat Hasan, *State and Locality in Mughal India: Power Relations in Western India, c.1572-1730*, p.111.

<sup>36</sup> *EFI*, 1655-60, p.109-110.

<sup>37</sup> *The Diaries of Streynsham Master*, 2 vols., ed. R.C. Temple, p.21.

<sup>38</sup> *EFI*, 1655-60, p.294.

<sup>39</sup> *The Diaries of Streynsham Master*, 2 vols., ed. R.C. Temple, p.32.

<sup>40</sup> *The Diaries of Streynsham Master*, 2 Vols., ed. R.C. Temple, vol. ii, P.26, no copy of this farman is there in MS. Collection of Charters and treaties at I.O.

cess on buying or selling of goods.<sup>41</sup> Goods that were intended for export, likewise, were not to pay *zakat* at any other place, but only custom dues at the time of embarkation.<sup>42</sup> The same position was reiterated by Shahjahan in 1637 and 1650, and by Aurangzeb in 1667 and 1680 but these orders could give only temporary relief to English. Between 1624-29, an agreement supposedly took place between the English and the Surat authorities (O.C.1299) that 'the English shall freely trade at their pleasure in the ports of Surat, Cambaya, Baroch, Goga, Bengala, Synda and in the other cities of the king's dominions and that they shall have the liberty to import and export all sorts of goods, except coral for one year no land customs at Broch, Baroda, Ankleshwar, Kurkeh, Berchaw, places belonging to this king, shall be demanded of them, but Broach being a port town, the customs there are payable.'<sup>43</sup> These orders also reiterated the imperial check over provincial governors and right of foreign merchants to free and fair trade.

The English, on several occasions, also had to separately pay a duty of 1% (*sad-yak*) on all purchase and sale transactions. It was an illegal exaction since it was already included in custom duty and was not payable as a separate duty.<sup>44</sup> Earlier, Akbar's *farman* had also remitted *Zakat*, *tamgha*, *baj*, *sadyak* (stamp tax, road toll-and all big and small levies) in A.H.990/1582-3. *Zakat* meant not only *baj* and *Tamgha* (Abul Fazl says that government taxation on the property of the subjects over and above the land revenue was called

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<sup>41</sup> *The Diaries of Streyنشam Master*, 2 Vols., ed. R.C. Temple, p.21.

<sup>42</sup> Ali Mohammed Khan, *Mirat -i-Ahmadi* (1761), Baroda, 1928, 1, P.193.

<sup>43</sup> *EFI*, 1624-29, p.27.

<sup>44</sup> *Mirat* also describes this as illegal duty, *Mirat*, vol.i, p.172.

*tamgha*<sup>45</sup> but also *zakat* in its legal sense and *sadyak* too,<sup>46</sup> as he was aware of the fact that hitherto, the *mutasaddis* (government accountants) used to collect and levy these duties and oppressed people.<sup>47</sup> We see that undue extortion of even legal taxes was done by the Mughal provincial officials and these orders could hardly stop collection of these taxes effectively as in 1624, Jahangir issued an order that once the English had paid the custom dues at either Surat or Broach, they were not to be charged *zakat* or any other cesses in the imperial dominion.<sup>48</sup>

*Cart-duty* was another illegal tax. It was a levy on the carts deployed by the merchants for transport of merchandise. Either it was inconsistently realized or it was so small that they hardly ever complained. From one reference where it is mentioned as ‘two rupees per cart’, the latter seems to be the case.<sup>49</sup> In Feb. 1623, Factors at Broach wrote to the Factors at Surat that Ankleshwar authorities ignore *parwana* of the Governor and demand a toll of 5 *mahmudis* on each cart.<sup>50</sup> An order was issued by Aurangzeb prohibiting acceptance of illegal taxes such as *maliya*, *bhent*, *baladrshi*, *tahsildari*, outgoing and incoming (collected by *amils* and *karoris*).<sup>51</sup>

However, it appears from Khafi Khan’s account that during and after Aurangzeb’s reign, it had become increasingly difficult for the imperial court to effectively implement collection of

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<sup>45</sup> *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol.ii, p.56.

<sup>46</sup> *Maktubat-i-Allami(Insha’-i-Abul Fazl)* DAFTAR I, tr. Mansura Haider, p.13.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*, p.14.

<sup>48</sup> *EFI*,1624-1629, p.21.

<sup>49</sup> *EFI*,1646-50, p.58.

<sup>50</sup> *EFI*,1622-23,p.189.

prohibited taxes, whether legal or illegal.<sup>52</sup> The Emperor gave orders for the remission of the *rahdari* (toll) (which was collected on every highway (*guzar*), frontier and ferry, and brought in a large sum to the revenue). He also remitted the *pandari*, a ground or house cess, which was paid throughout the imperial dominions by every tradesman and dealer, jeweller, bankers etc. for every stall or shop (to comfort the people and alleviate their distress because due to the movements of large armies through the country, especially in the eastern and northern parts, during the two years past, and scarcity of rain in some parts, had combined to make grain dear). But although these taxes were remitted and strict orders prohibited their collection, royal prohibition had no effect (except *pandari* which was collected from capital and chief cities), and *faujdars* and *jagirdars* in remote places did not withhold their hands from these exactions. Firstly because no fear or dread of punishment remained, secondly, revenue officers made deduction (for these cesses) from the *tankhwah* accounts of the *jagirdars*. So the *jagirdars*, under the pretext that the amount of these cesses was entered in their *tankhwah* papers continued to collect *rahdari* and many other abolished imposts, and even increased them.<sup>53</sup> Octroi duties were also assigned as *tankhwah* to the fief-holders.<sup>54</sup> A variety of local illegal levies were also being charged from them at local level, even when the provincial Mughal elite broadly worked in cooperation with them.

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<sup>51</sup> Ali Mohammad Khan, *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, p.272.

<sup>52</sup> Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab ul Lubab*, Calcutta, 1870, II, pp.87-90.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, vol. ii, p.87.

<sup>54</sup> Ali Mohammad Khan, *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, p.230.

Another aspect of their fiscal policy which caused friction between Mughal officials and European companies from the start was the problem of overvaluation of merchandise, which they did arbitrarily, despite not having officially so much powers regarding the same. (In July 1616, factors at Surat wrote to Roe that their goods were valued at 'reasonable rates' due to Prince's *firman* (*nishan*) shown to him i.e. to Governor of Surat (Sally Beg?)).<sup>55</sup> One reason was that again, the imperial policy was vague and detailing of tax-collection was in the hands of Governor of the province, and he sought to enhance revenue collection by fixing the price of commodities in excess of their cost price. This abuse arose because of the system of farming (*ijara*) the post of *Mutasaddi* of Surat to the highest bidder, (until 1640s when Shahjahan abolished the practice)<sup>56</sup> which enhanced the burden on the *Mutasaddis*, who, in order to meet the exorbitant initial contractual obligation, reimbursed themselves by overvaluing goods. They commented that 'Ever since Mir Mozaes (Mir Musa) entrance on this government (as the *Mutasaddi* of Surat), his evill auncient custome only of overrating your goods in customs house is rather augmented than lessened, and yet all that hee can doe,unlesse hee should exceed all reason and custom, will not bee enough to raise what hee hath engaged himself to make good unto the king for this Suratt custom house, viz. 800,000 m.(*mahmudis*), three-eighth more than his predecessor, Hackeyme Mersiah Ulzaman (Hakim Masih-us-Zaman) paid. Hee will bee an infinite looser by the bargaine.'<sup>57</sup> Shahjahan tried to remove this problem by abolishing

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<sup>55</sup> *Letters Received*, vol.iii, p.320.

<sup>56</sup> *EFI*,1637-41,p.xxvii.

<sup>57</sup> *EFI*,1637-41, p.207.

the system of *ijara*. But it seems that this step failed to automatically take care of this issue for the European Companies, since first, he declared a *zabita* (regulation) through a *farman* on the representation of Dutch for the fixation of prices for the assessment of custom-dues. This *farman* (1642) declares that goods purchased at Akbarabad (Agra) shall be assessed by raising the cost price by ten-twelfth(20%) and those purchased at Ahmedabad by ten-half(5%). The assessment of merchandise bought at Surat, Baroda and other places 'in the vicinity' of Surat was to be cost price stated in the account books (*bihchak*).<sup>58</sup> However, the English merchants continued to face the same problem since on 7<sup>th</sup> Feb. Factors at Swally Marine wrote to the Company that they hoped to 'purchase' large immunities in customs and *rahdari* (transit duty) as by the same means, Dutch got last year i.e. in 1642, whose goods will be cleared at Agra with addition of 20% in Agra, 10% in Ahmedabad, and in Baroda and Broach as they cost, while we pay 40% in Agra, 25% in Ahmedabad, and 12% more than their cost in Baroda and Broach, beside other exactions in addition to the cost price.<sup>59</sup> And it was only next year that they got relief. On Nov. 28<sup>th</sup> 1644, in another letter to the Company, they wrote that the king had given a *firman* for reduction in customs, the rates of Ahmedabad, from 25% to 5%, at Agra from 40% to 20% and Baroda from 12 and a half to nothing (i.e. only their cost price).<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> B.M.Suppl.Pers.482 ff.7(b)-8(a). cf. Farhat Hasan, *State and Locality in Mughal India: Power Relations in Western India, c.1572-1730*, p.114-15.

<sup>59</sup> *EFI*, O.C.1832, 1642-45, p.160. cf. Farhat Hasan, *State and Locality in Mughal India: Power Relations in Western India, c.1572-1730*, p.115.

<sup>60</sup> *EFI*, 1642-45, O.C.1901, p.214.

The concessions made to the English were same as were made to the Dutch before. It also implied that there was no general policy towards all foreign merchants but since they were treated equally, similar concessions had to be given to all other foreign merchants, if they were given to merchants of one European nation. The imperial policy was one of equal treatment to all European merchants.

Another area where disputes in taxation occurred was on royal monopoly items. Streynsham Master at Hugli, bitterly complained that salt and beeswax, the King's monopolies were heavily taxed.<sup>61</sup> At Gollapalle, (in Nuvid territory, near Bezwada), corne was about 50% above the market, on salt, beetle, tobacco at above double and treble the market rate.<sup>62</sup> The *mutassadis*, who were often from the mercantile community itself, and most of whom were merchant-princes or *malik-ut-tujjar* in their own right, could establish their monopolies as well, as in indigo and saltpeter.

The complaints and incidents of friction regarding the imposition of illegal taxes by English officials and merchants are over reported in the English accounts and diaries and they underplay the generally favourable and equitable fiscal policies of Mughal administration towards European merchants. The English, roughly by 1630s, had become a leading European company in Mughal India as the Portuguese power had waned by this time, leaving only Dutch in competition. Thereafter, they grew assertive primarily because of two reasons-one, their trade was growing and with the simultaneous increase in European piratical activities in

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<sup>61</sup> *The Diaries of Streynsham Master*, 2 Vols., ed. R.C. Temple, vol.i, p.53.

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*, p.173.



the Indian Ocean, their bargaining power was increasing; second, the overseas trading activities of Mughal elite had started expanding by the second half of the seventeenth century and the collaboration of Mughal elite with the European companies, specially the English Company was increasing, which took the form of not only trading together but also concessions in customs. The Mughal elite supported them in return for favors such as protection for their ships, space in European ships for their merchandise, better deal in business transaction with the English and the Dutch, and lastly, greater revenue for the port.<sup>63</sup>

The Mughal nobles, during this period were investing large sums of money in trading in activities 'either by engaging in trade directly or by making advances to merchants.'<sup>64</sup> Tavernier informs us 'On arrival for embarkation at Suret, you find plenty of money. For it is the principal trade of the nobles of India to place their money on speculation for Hormuz, Bassora and Mocha and even for Bantam, Achin and Philippines.'<sup>65</sup> Nurjahan and her brother Asaf Khan in particular depended on Roe. She, in turn, became Roe's solicitor and Asaf Khan his 'broker.'<sup>66</sup> The trading interests and overseas investments of Mir Jumla, Shaista Khan and Prince Azim us shan are also well known.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> F. Hasan, The Mughal Fiscal System in Surat and the English East India Company, *Modern Asian Studies*, 27,4 (1993), p.717.

<sup>64</sup> M.Athar Ali, *The Mughal nobility under Aurangzeb*, Bombay, 1966, p.154.

<sup>65</sup> Tavernier, *Travels in India*, vol.i, pp.37-38.

<sup>66</sup> *Letters Received*, vol.i, p.150.

<sup>67</sup> Sarkar, *The life of Mir Jumla* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition), Delhi, 1979, pp.196-201,263-68; Sushil Chaudhary, *Trade and Commercial Organisation in Bengal, 1650-1720*, (Calcutta, 1975), pp.35-36;

On the other hand, the commercial activities of the company benefitted immensely from the cooperation of the local Mughal officials. These officials persuaded by both hefty 'bribes' and their vested interests, even went to the extent of buckling the imperial edict to suit the interests of the English.<sup>68</sup> Joseph Hall, the chief of the Balasore factory, was referring to this when he wrote in 1669 that the company would enjoy their privileges only until 'the *nawabs* and Governors remain blinded and are willing to believe what the English affirm.'<sup>69</sup> Initially Mughal officials supported them but gradually friction grew and thereafter eventual fallout was evident, because of growing imperial strictness over the realization of customs and other legal levies. Roughly after 1650, as the trade of the Mughal elite grew, the cooperation with the European Companies also grew. But side by side collection of illegal levies by provincial and local elite also continued which could not be checked effectively and there was a growing frequency of *farmans* regarding prohibition of these levies and proper implementation of earlier *farmans*. Due to growing imperial check, the relation between them came under strain in the last quarter of the century. However, despite the repeated instances of collision with Mughal provincial elite on the issue of collection of taxes and proper implementation of imperial *farmans*, the imperial policy towards European merchants was one of protection and encouragement, as it was towards other merchants in general.

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Om Prakash, *The Dutch East India Company and the Economy of Bengal, 1630-1720*, Oxford, pp.29-33.

<sup>68</sup> Farhat Hasan, *State and Locality in Mughal India: Power Relations in Western India, c.1572-1730*, p.117.

From Aurangzeb's period onwards, various attempts were made to regulate and reorganize fiscal policy. One of the policies was to levy equal rates, even if the rates varied for different categories of merchants, throughout the empire. On 10<sup>th</sup> April 1665 the Emperor issued an order that in all provinces there would be two uniform rates for customs in future, as evidently different rates were being charged at different places. Now the rate was to be 2½ for Muslims and 5% for Hindus. (The general rule was to levy a duty of 2½% on the value of all goods imported).

Another attempt was made with regard to the correcting discrepancies in tax-collection. In 1665, an order was passed that the goods of 'the *feringis* and the Dutch' in Ahmadabad city were not to be taxed as they had already paid the duty at Surat.<sup>70</sup>

After settling in western Indian port-cities, the English Company was also expanding trade in the eastern ports. In 1651, the English opened their first commercial house in Bengal at Hughli, near Calcutta after securing the trade license from Prince Shuja. In 1652, Prince Shuja, then Governor of Bengal, supposedly granted them a *nishan* by which the English were allowed to trade in Bengal on payment of Rs. 3000 a year in lieu of all kinds of customs and dues. (English chief was given *sanad* (royal patent) to establish factory in imperial dominions specially Bengal given in lieu of Rs.3000/- (customs exemption)<sup>71</sup> (given in August 1651 was founded upon a *farman* procured by David-ge from Emperor a year

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<sup>69</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, p.279.

<sup>71</sup> *Riyaz-us-Salatin* (A History of Bengal), G.H.Salem, Delhi, 1975, p.32.

earlier given to James Bridgman,<sup>72</sup> which ensured that the English should not be troubled with customs on goods (either by land or by water), goods were not to be underrated, no cess was to be levied on buying or selling of goods, anchorage dues (*haq-i-langar*) were not to be arbitrarily charged.<sup>73</sup> Shahjahan's *farman* only exempted them from payment of road dues on their goods collected in Oudh, Agra. It was not meant to free them from usual custom duties at Delhi on goods shipped from Bengal ports. Nevertheless, Bridgman succeeded, by giving a present of 3000 rupees, in obtaining a *nishan* from Sultan Shuja which adopted the English contention that the imperial *farman* had freed them from all demands in Bengal.<sup>74</sup> (Streysham Master observed that Dutch had a *farman* allowing them trade on 4% custom duty on all traffic (plus presents exacted by the local Governors.). He wondered that English had been trading without a *farman* for which he said the only alternative is to purchase a farman for free trade for 3000 pound sterling). Later after the Viceroyalty of Shuja expired, a duty of 2½% on the goods was levied perhaps firstly because his *nishan* was passed taking in consideration of the fact that English trade was not considerable at that time (in 1661, Bengal establishments were made subordinate to the President of Madras and thereafter for the major part of the century, it remained so) and it could not be a binding on his successors in office and secondly, because English trade had later multiplied several times since Shuja's days. (Trade with Bengal was abundant and between 1668 and 1680, trade in

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<sup>72</sup> *EFI*, 1655-60, p.109-110.

<sup>73</sup> *The Diaries of Streysham Master*, 2 Vols., ed. R.C. Temple, (London, 1911), p.21.

<sup>74</sup> *ibid.*,

Bengal exports grew more than four times). For non-payment of dues, their saltpeter trade came to a halt (they blamed delay in satisfying Mir Jumla's demands for it), and a levy of 4% was put on all English exports (which was logical since the Dutch were also paying 4% duty on all traffic),<sup>75</sup> besides anchorage dues on their ships.<sup>76</sup> Initially, Mir Jumla's refusal to go by the English Company's officials' interpretation of the *nishan* led to this friction between the two. Later, surprisingly, we have a *parwana* issued by Mir Jumla the governor of Bengal, in a Persian collection, dated February 1660, wherein he orders the officials of Bengal and Orissa not to realize customs-dues (*hasil*) from the English, since they were exempted from its realization by virtue of Shahjahan's *farman* of 1650.<sup>77</sup> The motive for this is not clear but keeping in mind his increasing overseas trade, it could only have been prudent for him to help English.<sup>78</sup> English so far had no *farman* granting them exemption from the custom duty (Master, P.32). Besides, anchorage dues were legally payable by all merchants including the English, they were only given exemption from any illegal cesses except the anchorage. A *farman* supposedly given to Dutch in 1662 by Shah Aurangzeb reiterates the same. According to this *farman*, the Dutch were allowed to bring their ships to the ports of Hughli, Pipli and Balasore and were exempted from payment of any other duty at these three places after paying anchorage (*haq-i-langar*). At other places, they were supposed to pay custom-duties as formerly,

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<sup>75</sup> *ibid.*, p.32.

<sup>76</sup> *EFI*, 1655-60, p.294.

<sup>77</sup> British Museum, Addl. 24039, f. 8.

<sup>78</sup> For details, see J.N. Sarkar *Life and times of Mir Jumla*.

along with an order that no illegal cesses be taken from them.<sup>79</sup> It was only in 1664 that everyone was excused from payment of customs for one year and thereafter half of the customs (i.e. half percent of the customs) was to be exempted.<sup>80</sup>

It is clear from the order (*hasb-ul-hukm*) issued by Jafar Khan, the imperial *diwan*, on the instructions of the emperor, on 14 March 1664 that the reduction was (not for half the customs, but for) one-half percent, i.e. from two and a half percent to two percent. This *hasb-ul-hukm* (in translation furnished by the English factors, ran:

“The king out of his own favour to the merchant, mahometans, Hindoes, Armenians, Hollanders, English, Portugez, French and Malabars, for goods that come from other ports to Surat for all other goods that are carried out from Hindustan to other places, whole customes thereof, he hath given free for one yeare. And, moreover havening regard to the welfare and good condition of the Dutch and English in the customes which are paid by other merchants and them hath freely rewarded you; for the 2½% of which you pay to me the King’s custome house he hath given you one half percent free, and hath wrote a phyrmand (*farman*) to the officers of the *bander* (port) that they always take 2% upon all your goods.”<sup>81</sup> King demanded two and a half percent again, from both English and Dutch, which was taken off for service done during

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<sup>79</sup> *The Diaries of Streynsham Master*, 2 Vols., ed. R.C. Temple, vol.ii, p.26. no copy of this farman is there in MS. Collection of Charters and treaties at I.O.

<sup>80</sup> *EFI*, 1661-64, p.312.

<sup>81</sup> *EFI*, 1661-64, P.313-14.

Shivaji's attack at Surat.<sup>82</sup> But according to the farman passed in 1667, English were paying three and a half percent and Dutch and Portuguese were paying two percent. It means that since they all were paying 4% earlier, the English were, as per the half percent reduction given by the *hasb-ul-hukm*, were to pay customs at the rate of three and a half percent. The Dutch and Portuguese, on the other hand, were paying simply 2% the exemption in their case being one and half percent. Because if according to the *hasb-ul-hukm*, they were paying 2½% and the reduction was made of half percent, then they would have been paying two percent; and if they were paying two percent, then there would be no need for Aurangzeb to pass a *farman* for reduction in customs to 2%. Since this was discriminatory and against the imperial policy of equal treatment to all merchants, the farman of 1667 orders a similar reduction for the English so that henceforth the rate of custom-dues on their merchandise shall also be 2%.<sup>83</sup>

The latter half of Aurangzeb's reign saw a growing pressure on the alliance resulting from determined efforts on the part of the imperial court to raise resources from cesses on trade and commerce and to organize the Mughal mercantile taxation system and therefore, the local officials were no more able to stand by the English, and continue to grant them the privilege of customs-exemption, as their legitimate right.

The English sources give us the impression that before the accession of Aurangzeb, the Company was enjoying, except for

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<sup>82</sup> *The Diaries of Streynsham Master*, 2 Vols., ed. R.C. Temple, vol.ii, p. 292.

occasional harassment by the Mughal officials, the privilege of custom-exemption by the virtue of the *farman* of the Emperor Shahjahan. (Shahjahan's *farman* of 1650 to the English company intended was to exempt them from the realization of transit dues and other illegal cesses, whereas in the official English documents, the *farman* is read as granting to the English exemption from customs-dues). In the Persian documents concerning the English Company, there are as many as six *farmans* of Shahjahan from 1627 to 1656, i.e. covering almost the whole of his reign, and in none of them are they granted the privilege of customs-exemption. Yet not only was the English claim accepted by the Mughal officials in Shahjahan's own lifetime<sup>84</sup> but more significantly after Aurangzeb's accession. Even so, it does appear from the Persian documents that the English were able to enjoy this privilege, at least in Bengal, and, more surprisingly, their interpretation of Shahjahan's *farman* was sustained by the local officials. Thus, we have a *parwana* issued by Mir Jumla the governor of Bengal, in a Persian collection, dated February 1660, wherein he orders the officials of Bengal and Orissa not to realize customs-dues (*hasil*) from the English, since they were exempted from its realization by

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<sup>83</sup> Farhat Hasan, *Conflict and Cooperation in Anglo-Mughal Trade Relations during the Reign of Aurangzeb*, *JESHO*, 34, 3 (October 1991), p.355.

<sup>84</sup> See Shah Shuja's *nishan* on 16<sup>th</sup> April (B.M.Add.21039, f.7) and *parwana* of Mirza Mohammad Hayat, Deputy Subedar of Orissa, issued on 15<sup>th</sup> November 1658 (*ibid.*, f.10). cf. Farhat Hasan, *State and Locality in Mughal India: Power Relations in Western India, c.1572-1730*, p.113.



virtue of Shahjahan's *farman* of 1650.<sup>85</sup> In other extant orders (*parwanas*) with similar contents were issued later by Ihtisham Khan, *Nazim* of Orissa, on 12<sup>th</sup> August 1661<sup>86</sup> by Daud Khan,<sup>87</sup> Governor of Bengal (during the brief period between the transfer of Mir Jumla (Viceroyalty of Mir Jumla (1656-1663) and the assumption of office by Shaista Khan as *Subadar* on 25<sup>th</sup> August 1663 and again on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1664<sup>88</sup> (with the only difference that in these documents the case in favour of the English has been bolstered not just by grant of the imperial *farman* but also by the *nishan* of Shah Shuja and the *perwana* of Mir Jumla), similar claims are made on behalf of the English Company. Although the *farman* of 1650 was expressly given to protect them from illegal levies, we notice increasing assertive tendencies of English Company, and of Mughal elite giving them the legal cover in form of *nishans* and *parwanas* to help them flout tax-payment through deliberate misinterpretation of *farmans*. From the fact that in several of the extant *parwanas* of local officials, the English Company's interpretation of Shahjahan's *farman* is accepted, one suspects a collusion of interests, that is barely discernable in the European documentation. These documents are remarkable in two respects: one, they validate their instructions by virtue of an

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<sup>85</sup> British Museum, Addl. 24039, f. 8. cf. Farhat Hasan, *State and Locality in Mughal India: Power Relations in Western India, c.1572-1730*, p.117.

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.*, f.11. cf. Farhat Hasan, *State and Locality in Mughal India: Power Relations in Western India, c.1572-1730*, p.117.

<sup>87</sup> British Museum, Addl. 24039, f. 13. cf. Farhat Hasan, *State and Locality in Mughal India: Power Relations in Western India, c.1572-1730*, p.117.

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*, f.12. cf. Farhat Hasan, *State and Locality in Mughal India: Power Relations in Western India, c.1572-1730*, p.117.

imperial *farman* which was either never granted or had nothing to do with the concessions that were claimed by the English, secondly, in these bonafides of Shahjahan's decrees remains undisturbed despite the legal convention that privileges extended by a preceding Emperor required confirmation by the new Emperor. That such a confirmation was not provided by Aurangzeb in the case of customs-exemption becomes evident from Aurangzeb's *farman* of 7<sup>th</sup> August 1667.<sup>89</sup>

The *farman* of 1667 given on 26 June, 1667 in 10<sup>th</sup> R.Y. of Aurangzeb (Persian copy of which is available)<sup>90</sup> given to the Governor and other officials of Surat, carried specific instructions for the officials of Bengal, Akbarabad (Agra) and 'other towns and cities' (It read 'Be it known to the officers of Surat and other towns and cities (*digar balad-o-amsar*)<sup>91</sup> that 'whereas the customs-dues for the Dutch and the Portuguese, with a view on the well-being of the said peoples' had been reduced from three and a half percent to 2%, English had asked for a similar favour (backed by a letter from Ghiyasuddin Khan, the governor of Surat, to the *wazir* Jafar Khan, recommending the English as deserving of imperial favours), hence a similar concession be made to English from the customs (*mahsul*) rate of Rs.3 (3%), rupee 1 (1%) has been exempted; *mahsul*, thus has been fixed at Rs.2(2%). It is evident that the *farman* aimed at giving equal status to all European Companies. They had also

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<sup>89</sup> Farhat Hasan, *Conflict and Cooperation in Anglo-Mughal Trade Relations during the Reign of Aurangzeb*, p.354.

<sup>90</sup> BM, Addl.24039, f.15, cf. Farhat Hasan, *State and Locality in Mughal India: Power Relations in Western India, c.1572-1730*, p.113.

requested that their goods brought in Bengal, Agra and elsewhere carried to Surat (via Burhanpur and Ahmedabad) might be free from all way dues.<sup>92</sup> The *farman* further said that the governors, captains of guards, lieutenants of countries (*faujdars*), guards of passes and highways (*rahdars*) should not stop on the way merchandise which the English purchased in Bengal, Agra and other provinces and transported by the way of Burhanpur and Ahmadabad for sale in the port of Surat, on the pretence of taking *rahdari* (road tolls) transit dues or other duties and *abwabs* abolished by the emperor (nowhere in these instructions are they told to consider the customs duty as exempted and its realization illegal). Clearly, the *farman* also aimed at providing them protection from illegal levies.

The English (confident of getting their own interpretation of the farman prevail again through their links with the Mughal princes and provincial officials, as in the case of *farman* of Shahjahan in 1650, deliberate misinterpretation of which was reinforced by the *nishan* of Shah Shuja and the *perwana* of Mir Jumla) raised a controversy again regarding the area of implementation of the *farman* of 1667. They argued that the document was restricted in its spatial context to the town of Surat but the officials in Bengal, insisted on the proper interpretation that it was applicable to the whole of Mughal domain (no justification in the contention of the English that the province of Bengal lay

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<sup>91</sup> British Museum, Addl. 24039, f 15. cf. Farhat Hasan, *Conflict and Cooperation in Anglo-Mughal Trade Relations during the Reign of Aurangzeb*, p.354.

<sup>92</sup> *EFI*, 1665-67, p.274. cf. Farhat Hasan, *Conflict and Cooperation in Anglo-Mughal Trade Relations during the Reign of Aurangzeb*, p.354.

beyond its purview, so that the privilege of custom exemption in that province remains unaffected). It seems that English were themselves aware of the fact that jurisdiction of the *farman* was not restricted to Surat but was applicable to the whole of Mughal India.<sup>93</sup>

Once again, it seems, the English were able to get the local officials in Bengal, to ignore the *farman*, and some, at least, were able to see it, like the English, as inapplicable to eastern India. Mughal officials upheld the contention of the English and continued to exempt the Company from customs-duty, again reinforcing the wrong interpretation of the *farman* by issuing *parwanas*. Thus, in Orissa, Tarbiyat Khan, on 25 March 1668,<sup>94</sup> and following him, Rasheed Khan, on 5 July 1674, issued orders (*parwanas*) ordering officials not to levy customs duty on its shipment (*asbab-i jahazat*).<sup>95</sup>

In Bengal, Shaista Khan issued a *parwana* on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1669 ordering the officers of Bengal and Orissa that, 'whereas the English representative (*wakil*), 'Mister' William Blake, has, presently, petitioned that the custom-duty (*hasil*) on the baggage and merchandise that the English Company purchases and sells in Bengal and Orissa, is exempted by virtue of the exalted *farman* (of Shahjahan), the *sanad* of the late Khan-i-Khanan (Mir Jumla) and the *parwana* of this person. Despite the exemption, certain persons

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<sup>93</sup> *EFI*, 1668-9, p.166.

<sup>94</sup> British Museum, Addl. 24039, f.17. For details, see Farhat Hasan, *Conflict and Cooperation in Anglo-Mughal Trade Relations during the Reign of Aurangzeb*, p.355.

<sup>95</sup> *ibid.*, British Museum, Addl. 24039, ff. 22.

obstruct their merchandise on account of the custom-dues. It has, thus, been decreed that, in the event of this being true, in accordance with the imperial order and the aforesaid *sanads*, the baggage and merchandise of the English Company should not be detained and obstructed on account of custom dues, at the time of ingress and egress of their goods.<sup>96</sup> In 1670, despite Shaista Khan's intercession, Malik Qasim, the port officer (*Shahbandar*) of Hughli and Malik Zainuddin, the port officer of Balesar, refused to treat the goods of English as custom free, and insisted on levying the duty of 2% in accordance with Aurangzeb's *farman* of 1667.<sup>97</sup> The matter had to be referred to the court by Shaista Khan. The reply of the imperial *wazir* Asad Khan, clearly states the position of the imperial court. It stipulates that, in consonance with the imperial *farman*, those goods, and only those goods, which have paid their custom-dues at Surat should be asked to pay their customs again (*mahsul-i-tarkar*) in Bengal and other provinces of the empire.<sup>98</sup> Despite such directions from the imperial court, Shaista Khan managed to extend the undue concession to the English.

In 1672, Shaista Khan issued another *parwana* with similar contents as in his *parwana* on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1669, this time on the representation of Capt. Walter Clavell.<sup>99</sup> (Walter Clavell presented his suite, 'I confirme earlier privileges (i.e. letters patent of

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<sup>96</sup> *ibid.*, f.19.

<sup>97</sup> See Shaista Khan's *parwana* dated 30<sup>th</sup> July, 1670; B.M.Add.24039, f.9.

<sup>98</sup> *ibid.*, f.24. For details, see Farhat Hasan, *Conflict and Cooperation in Anglo-Mughal Trade Relations during the Reign of Aurangzeb*, p.357.

<sup>99</sup> Translation of Nawab Shaista Khan's confirmation of privileges of English in Bengal (June 1672, Bengal)(copy of this *parwana* exists in Charters and Treaties, vol.ii.

Emperor; *nishan* of Shah Shuja and *parwana* of Mir Jumla): whatever goods the said Company shall import from Balasore or any other place near sea up to Hughli, Casimbazar or Patna, what they export from Patana or any other place to Balasore shall be custom free').<sup>100</sup> In 1676,<sup>101</sup> in an answer to *waqia-nawis* (of Bihar state or Patna) about English' privileges in those parts of Aurangzeb's empire, Shaista Khan confirmed that English have such a *farman* from emperor, same privileges I gave them (in buying and selling, import and export, they are not to be hindered) even if they do not give a copy of this *farman*<sup>102</sup> (the English contended that the goods entering Bengal through Hughli or Balesar were, by the virtue of the *farman*, exempted from custom-dues). The Mughal provincial elite continued to give more concessions of the same nature to the English Company. In 1679, for example, when the *nawab* of Hughli demanded a copy of *farman*, finding fault at which he asked them to get a paper from Delhi court and demanded custom of goods on board computed at 5%, Matthias returned to Kasimbazar in October, obtained a *nishan* signed by Prince Mohammad Azam, granting freedom of trade to the English in Bengal. Hedges tried to negotiate with Shaista Khan, the *Subedar*, that he procure a *farman* from Emperor in favour of English to take off 5% duty on all treasure, imported since 1679 and stopping seizure of Company's boats and seizure of goods.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Farhat Hasan, *Conflict and Cooperation in Anglo-Mughal Trade Relations during the Reign of Aurangzeb*, p.357, f.20.

<sup>101</sup> Translation of letter from Shaista Khan; a copy of this letter is in *Charters and Treaties*, vol.ii, pp.47-48, where date is wrongly given as 1683.

<sup>102</sup> *The Diaries of Streynsham Master*, vol.ii, p.23n.

<sup>103</sup> *The Diaries of Streynsham Master*, vol.ii, p.273-4.

Aurangzeb's *farman* of 1680 raised the custom-duty on the goods of the English company from 2% to 3½%, this enhancement included the 1% *jiziya* tax (poll-tax) re-imposed by Aurangzeb in 1679,<sup>104</sup> while Hindus paid 5% and Muslims paid 2½% on all imports and exports.<sup>105</sup> Khafi Khan writes about this increase that 'the Mughal authorities unable to discriminate between the different representations of the same European nation, had treated the interlopers with a certain measure of favour, and after they had purchased a *farman* the Mughal Emperor, they were allowed to trade without any restrictions. This was not surprising seeing that the newcomers expressed their willingness to pay a higher rate of import duty up to 5%. The Mughal authorities therefore considered themselves entitled to charge the London Company (old company) an increased rate of 3½%, as compared to the previous rate of 2½%.<sup>106</sup> If we believe Khafi Khan, then the increase of 3½% was not acceptable to the English, and they 'flatly refused to pay it.'<sup>107</sup> The English also raised a controversy on that part of the text in which the Mughal officials were ordered to desist "at all other places" from realizing anything from the English. It obviously implied that once the English had paid the customs-dues at Surat, they should not be asked to pay anything anywhere else in the Mughal domain. It did not mean that even those goods which had come from China or any Eastern island to Bengal ports directly and

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<sup>104</sup> BM. Addl.24039, f.28; *The Diaries of Streynsham Master*, vol.ii, p.252.

<sup>105</sup> Ashin Dasgupta, *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat C. 1700-1750* (New Delhi, 1994), p.17.

<sup>106</sup> Khafi Khan, *Muntakhab ul Lubab*, vol. ii, p.21.

<sup>107</sup> *ibid.*

not through Surat, and therefore could not have paid duty at Surat, were not to pay custom duty in Bengal. All other traders paid custom duty at the ports and English were not exempted from it either. The English, on the other hand, read it to imply that while the *farman* raises the customs-dues from 2 to 3½% in Surat, it exempts them from custom and all other levies, everywhere else, including Bengal.<sup>108</sup> Thus, the English contended that the goods entering Bengal through Hugli or Balesar were, by virtue of the *farman*, exempted from customs-dues, since hitherto they were enjoying the same custom-exemption allowed by provincial officials who had issued orders (*parwanas*) giving such exemption by deliberately misinterpreting Shahjahan's *farman* of 1650.<sup>109</sup>

However, this time the provincial elite could not stand by the English and let them get undue exemptions. Shaista Khan's *parwana* of 1680<sup>110</sup> and of Haji Shafi Khan, the *diwan*, dated 6<sup>th</sup> June, 1681<sup>111</sup> clearly stipulate that only those goods which have paid their custom-dues at the port of Surat should at no other place be asked to pay these duties again, and hence all goods of the Company entering Bengal were not to be custom-free. Moreover, they also refused to grant concessions which earlier provincial

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<sup>108</sup> British Museum, Addl. 24039, f. 28; For details, see C.R. Wilson, *The Early annals of the English in Bengal*, Delhi, Reprint, 1983, vol. I., pp. 78-79.

<sup>109</sup> British Museum, Addl. 24039, f.17, 22. For details, see Farhat Hasan, *Conflict and Cooperation in Anglo-Mughal Trade Relations during the Reign of Aurangzeb*, p. 352-3.

<sup>110</sup> *ibid.*, B.M.Add. 24039, f.32. cf. Farhat Hasan, *Conflict and Cooperation in Anglo-Mughal Trade Relations during the Reign of Aurangzeb*, p. 357.

<sup>111</sup> *ibid.*, f.33. cf. Farhat Hasan, *Conflict and Cooperation in Anglo-Mughal Trade Relations during the Reign of Aurangzeb*, p. 357.



governors had given through *parwanas* reinforcing the wrong reading of the imperial *farmans*. For example, the *parwanas* of Shaista Khan (1680) and Haji Shafi Khan (1681) also instructed the port officers to desist from taking Rs.3000 from the English which they were taking in lieu of custom-exemption.

However we notice that despite the occasional instances of disagreement over taxation between the Mughal ruling elite and the European companies, the Mughal Emperors generally followed a policy of encouragement towards European merchants. This attitude is evident from two *farmans* which allowed Dutch to stabilize their trade in Gujarat and Bengal by maintaining access to the hinterlands for both of these areas.<sup>112</sup>

One *farman* was issued to the Dutch by Shahjahan in 1643.<sup>113</sup> It read: "All Governors, *foujdars*, and *Zamindars*, watchmen in the highways, from the port of Pipli upto Agra, are informed, that whereas the king has permitted the Dutch, to bring to Agra the commodities which they collect in Banaras, Jualpoer (Jalalpur), Gairabad (Khairabad) and other places, and (whereas) when they bring to this place and convey expensive commodities, tolls and *rahdaris* are extorted (from the Dutch) in all villages, resting places and roads, by several watchmen here, not allowing them free passage from place to place; now none will have the power to demand *rahdaris*, charges, etc., more than is authorized.

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<sup>112</sup> Ishrat Alam, "*Dutch Trade at Awadh in the Seventeenth Century*," (mimeographed), presented in the 12<sup>th</sup> session of U.P. History Congress, Bareilly, 3-4 November 2001.

<sup>113</sup> Dutch translation is available in Journal van Dircq van Adrichem, p.107.cf. Ishrat Alam, "*Dutch Trade at Awadh in the Seventeenth Century*," (mimeographed), presented in the 12<sup>th</sup> session of U.P. History Congress, Bareilly, 3-4 November 2001.

In the entire dominions of the king where His Majesty's pen has granted the privilege, they be allowed to move freely; they are exempted from everything, in this respect earlier *farmans* were granted to them, as are in their possession."<sup>114</sup>

Another *farman* was addressed to all the concerned Mughal officers of 'the Purab' (east) from Pipli Bandar (poot) (Orissa) to Agra who were ordered not to collect toll or similar other levies from the Dutch, who were free to trade at Banaras, Jalalpur, Khairabad and other places.<sup>115</sup> The Dutch were thus provided with royal protection against custom-exactions. This exemption was particularly useful for the Dutch at the time since the prices of textiles from Agra had risen then (1643) by 37%. Around 1658, when due to war of succession their trade dwindled, they sent their chief of the Surat factory to procure a *farman* from Aurangzeb. He was issued a *farman* dated 20<sup>th</sup> October, 1662.<sup>116</sup> By this *farman*, they were exempted from paying tolls at Tajganj (Agra). In addition, they were also exempted from paying one percent

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<sup>114</sup> *ibid.*, Dagh Register 1643-44, p.170.

<sup>115</sup> Shahjahan's *farman* is available in a Dutch translation of the Persian text in H.T. Colenbrander, ed., *Dagh Register gahouden int Casteel Batavia 1643-1644*, 's-Gravenhage, 1902, p.170. cf. Ishrat Alam, "Dutch Trade at Awadh in the Seventeenth Century," (mimeographed), presented in the 12<sup>th</sup> session of U.P. History Congress, Bareilly, 3-4 November 2001.

<sup>116</sup> *ibid.*, Dr. A.J. Bernet Kempers, ed., *Journal Van Dircq van Adrichem's Hofreis naar den Groot-Mogol Aurangzeb*, 1663, pp. 299-300; see also "Dutch translations of Farmans granted by the Mughal to the VOC and the director of the Dutch Factory at Surat, collected and translated by order of the Director J. Schreuder, 1618-1729, pp.73-80.

brokerage in the purchase of indigo.<sup>117</sup> Rahdari was to be according to the authorized rates.

In the last quarter of the seventeenth century, differences between the English traders and the Mughal officers were brewing. In 1681 the Hughli agency was made independent of Madras, and placed under a Governor and Council and William Hedges, the first governor and agent of Bengal arrived at Hughli on 24th August, 1682. When he reached Hughli in 1682, he reportedly found that the trade there was almost at a standstill. The several affronts, insolences, and abuses daily by Balchand (the superintendent of customs at Hughli) being grown insufferable, the Agent and Council made use of divers expedients for redress of their grievances; but all means proving ineffectual it was agreed in consultation that the only expedient now left was for the agent to go himself in person to the *Nawab* and *Diwan* at Dacca, to make some settled adjustment concerning the customs.

The complaints of the English traders against the local agents of the Mughal Government were- The demand of an *ad valorem* duty on the actual merchandise imported, instead of the lumpsum of Rs.3,000 per annum into which it had been commuted during the viceroyalty of Prince Shuja, and also the enhancement of the rate of duty from time to time. The English also claimed that Aurangzeb's *farman* of 15th March 1680 entitled them, to the payment of a consolidated duty of 3 to 4% at Surat to import goods and to trade absolutely free of customs and, other exactions at all other parts in the Mughal empire, even though these goods had not been imported via Surat and therefore not taxed at all.

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<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, J. Schreuder, p.75.

Arriving at Dacca on 25<sup>th</sup> October, Hedges, spent a month and a half in negotiations and returned with promises from Shaista Khan. The *Subahdar*, that he would procure a *farman* from the Emperor in favour of the English, take off the claim to 5% duty on all the treasure imported since 1679, and remove the interdiction of English trade throughout Bengal. But practically nothing resulted from this mission. The local officials at Hughli continued to stop the Company's boats and seize their goods. In vain Hedges offered large sums of money in order to be excused the payment of customs.

The conflicts between the English and the Mughal authorities in Bengal led to an armed conflict between them in 1686. The former suffered a thorough defeat, but, such was the depth of relations between them, were brought back and reinstated in their former position. Concessions in taxes, however, remained an incessant demand for the Europeans (in particular, the English) in India-a demand that ultimately became the pretext for the takeover of Bengal in the battle of Plassey in 1757.

## **Conclusion**

## Conclusion

This study has tried to unravel the complex levels of interaction between the Mughals and the Europeans in India. Interactions between the Europeans and the Mughals were not restricted to matters of trade and commerce, but extended to socio-cultural spheres as well.

In so far as Mughal perception of European trade is concerned, there was the gradual realization that the Europeans enjoyed maritime supremacy and were for that reason, masters of the seas. There was, in Mughal perception, a very fine line of separation between control over the seas and piracy. Very often European attempts to dominate the seas and the overseas trade were construed in Mughal perception as a form of piracy. Relegation of European maritime supremacy to the domain of piracy allowed the Mughals to treat the Europeans merchants as no different from other merchants engaged in trade and commerce. Despite their maritime supremacy, therefore, Europeans were never considered as political powers who could challenge the Mughal might in India. At the same time, a mutual appreciation of each other's powers through what is conveniently termed as

'balance of terror' there had developed varying levels of relations between the Mughals and the European merchants. At the provincial and local levels of administration atleast, there were repeated instances of growing cooperation between the Europeans and the Mughal authorities. Cooperation did not preclude conflicts and therefore, the relation between the Mughals and the European merchants was a paradoxical one, a relationship in which cooperation and conflict went together.

The Mughal court created an atmosphere of receptivity of doctrines, practices and beliefs of Christianity by discussion over theological and metaphysical issues in the *munazara* debates during the time of Akbar. Books on Christianity were gifted by Jesuit fathers and several translations of Christian works were done as well. Christianity was both studied and tolerated during Akbar's reign. The interest in European beliefs began to decline during the succeeding period, but never quite disappeared, reappearing, for example, in Mughal art and architecture.

In so far as the Mughal response to European science and technology is concerned, the Mughals displayed a 'selective reception' for European technology. The European 'toys,' as the Mughal called them, indeed aroused curiosity of the Mughal court and served to shape and reinforce the image of Europeans as a

technologically ingenious people. Some of such things were purchased, bought and even imitated by the Mughal kings and nobles but the response remained a sporadic one-intermittent and discontinuous. The reasons for the lack of sustained interest in European technology were complex, and it would be wrong to attribute it to any monocausal explanation.

We notice a similar negligent attitude towards European medicine. Despite the fact that a number of physicians were employed and respected for their skill in medicine, even as early as the period of Akbar, and their number only grew over the century,<sup>1</sup> there is no evidence of any effort by the Mughal elites to study or incorporate the European advances in medicine. There was an obscurantist reliance on the traditional systems of medicine. (Fryer observed that anatomy is not approved wherein they lean too much on tradition).<sup>2</sup> And good physicians continued to be compared with Galen and Avicenna.<sup>3</sup>

Apart from the occasional information regarding Eastern Europe from the Ottoman Turks, the initial interaction of the

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<sup>1</sup> Jouhar Aftabchi, *Tazkira-ul-Waqiat*, tr. Calcutta, 1904, pp.168.

<sup>2</sup> John Fryer, *A New Account of East India and Persia being Nine Years' Travels, 1672-81* vol. ii, p. 102.

<sup>3</sup> *Zakhiratul Khawanin*, II, pp. 271-2; *Nobility under the great Mughals*, Z.A.Desai (based on *Zakhirat-ul-Khawanin*), p.184.



Mughal Emperors like Akbar and Jahangir with the Jesuit fathers directly helped in shaping their perception of European political system. Although a few questions were occasionally asked by the Mughal Emperors from Portuguese fathers or European envoys or other visitors at the court, the Mughals never displayed a serious concern to understand contemporary European polity. The European countries were not given a respectable political status, and were treated as a minor political force at the Mughal court. This comes out from the following noticeable things: European ambassadors were not respected and were not even mentioned in court histories or private memoirs of Mughal kings; despite repeated efforts of the ambassadors of different European countries, they could not conclude a 'treaty' with the Mughals; the gifts given by European ambassadors were treated as exotic and fashionable but were not construed as symbolic of equal political associations; letters of European kings were never answered, nor was any embassy ever sent to any Eastern or Western European country (though many such embassies were ostensibly planned).

The Europeans, in the Mughal perception, came from a place which was socially and culturally inferior not only to the Mughal Empire but also the other empires in the Islamic world-the Safavids, the Ottomans and the Uzbeks.

The image at Mughal court of Europe was that of an 'inconsiderable island.' Aurangzeb questioned that representation, but made no effort to move beyond the sketchy and obscure understanding of the European political system. There is no work of the period, dealing even cursorily, with European political structure. The Arab literature on geography of the world had included knowledge of European races, rivers, islands and mountain ranges but these were full of hyperboles and speculations. The Mughal elite stuck to Ptolemaic geographical concepts and made no attempt to improve upon that knowledge. Curiously, maps and atlases brought by Europeans, even gifted by them to Mughal rulers, such as by Jesuit Father Monserrate to Akbar and by the English ambassador Thomas Roe to Jahangir were treated with little interest and were often returned. And again, very few geographical treatises were written during this period and whatever was written was heavily influenced by Ptolemaic geography and had nothing new to offer on European geography.

By the close of the seventeenth century and early eighteenth century, there seems to have developed greater interest in the European world. This was owing to the political ascendancy of the Europeans in India, and did not signify a change in the contemporary intellectual set-up. It would still be wrong to

overemphasize the point, because one of the greatest theorists of the eighteenth century, Shah Waliullah could still not see the threats of British ascendancy in India, and continued to see the Marathas and the Jats as threats to the Mughal imperium.

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